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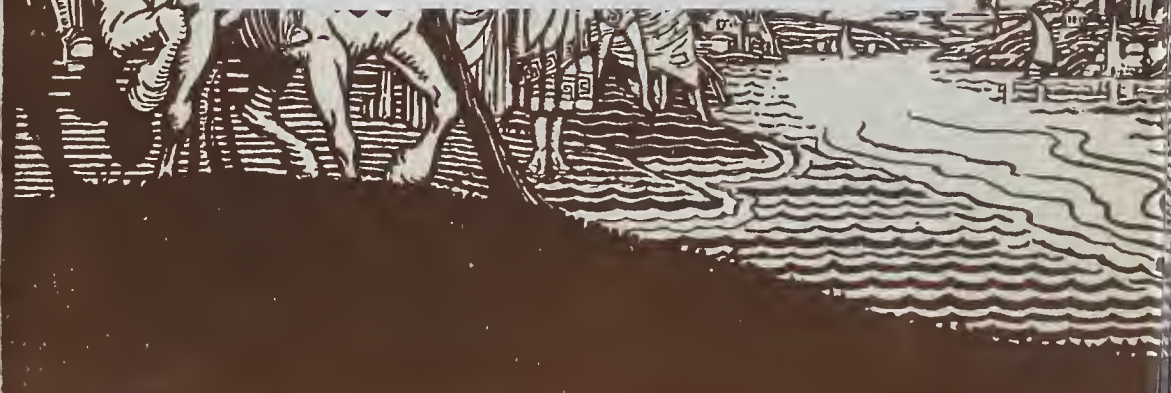


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MORNINGSIDE EDITION

*Volume 4*

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IN LITERATURE

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*The*  
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*Medieval Song and Story*



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## INTRODUCTION

THE term Middle Ages is commonly understood to cover the centuries of European history between the fifth and the fifteenth. In the brief introduction that follows, intended to furnish the reader with an approach to the specimens of literatures in many tongues and of widely separated ages which make up this volume, we shall inquire how the Middle Ages came by their name and why such a large tract of time is treated as a unit, different as one part of it may be from another. Then we shall try to single out some of its characteristic institutions and peculiar modes of literary expression. Finally we shall throughout be concerned to observe how much of that which is designated as medieval has served to shape life as it is lived today.

In attempting to imagine an age so long by-gone it is not enough merely to blot out of the picture such familiar things as airplanes, motor cars, telephones, and all the mechanism that we set such store by today, because any mature person who passed his youth in the country can recall a life which got on somehow without most of these things. Yet it was not "medieval," however much a critical young person today might be disposed to apply that epithet to it. To imagine oneself in the Middle Ages it is not enough, again, to conjure up a romantic picture of knights and castles and wizards and damsels in distress, though all those things play a certain part in medieval literature and the literature that derives from it. The first step is to imagine oneself without any pockets and with very little money or none in the pouch at one's girdle. Such a plight would today be desperate indeed: without money no movies, or opera, no social diversion, no educational opportunity, no looking at beautiful things, no real membership in society. To the man of the Middle Ages all this came, theoretically at least, without price from one source — the Church, in which everyone was incorporated in earliest infancy. Though he were no better than a serf bound to the tilling of his acres, the Church door stood open; in its recurrent festivals he delightedly shared, and from it he learned a way of life that promised him eternal bliss as the reward of his well-doing.

To free men — and not all agricultural laborers were serfs in the later Middle Ages — the Church offered a career, and ability could pass not only to the highest ecclesiastical office, but to employment in the civil service, to studious leisure, and to statecraft. The clerk's tonsure set a class apart, with legal jurisdiction, a language, and a close-knit organization all its own. But there was another type besides those who labor and those who pray — the

man on horseback. He also had his code, a *chivalric* code, in which loyalty was the virtue most cried up, loyalty to his lord, loyalty to his lady. His real business was fighting — a picturesque and on the whole pleasant and profitable occupation — and making love, both under the most elaborate set of rules. His relaxations were hunting and feasting. The fighting man ideally passed through the stages of page and squire before he won the spurs of knighthood, but a good man-at-arms could make a professional career for himself outside the regular routine. Similarly the courtly lover subjected himself to a rigorous discipline and any failure of technique might be severely judged by his social equals in a court of love.

Under the feudal system everybody was somebody's man, owed service to somebody in return for land or support of some kind, and everybody had his well-defined place in the scheme. A careful study of the organization of a political party today is perhaps the readiest way to understand how a feudal society is put together. And just as today there are those who stand outside the political parties, so in the Middle Ages there was a group which did not quite fit into the scheme, but which eventually passed to complete domination — the merchants. On one side, their activity was organized in the form of guilds in which each man knew his place, was apprentice, journeyman, or master, and the humblest apprentice might look forward to the day when his industry and ability would bring him to the top. Though there were tricks in all trades, then as now, the ideal was craftsmanship, and the beautiful things they made, from the most ordinary utensil to a cathedral, testify to the joy they must have felt in good work. They had a much better way of life than the agricultural laborer, who then and since, except under pioneer conditions, has had a comparatively unsatisfactory time of it. On another side, the merchant class gradually attained great wealth and power by means of the application of capital to trading enterprise with which we are familiar. Towns grew up, the government of which fell into the hands of the guilds, and recruited by discontented agricultural laborers and aided by the common soldier with his longbow, the merchant group finally upset the medieval scheme and ushered in the modern world. The man on horseback with his chivalry, his feudal loyalty, was a beaten man, and his castle had not long to wait before for purposes of defense it was rendered useless by gunpowder.

It must not be supposed that the picture here sketched holds true for the whole period of the Middle Ages. It represents rather what they aimed at and in part finally achieved. It was a very human world they made of it. The earth was the center of the universe; around it wheeled the planets, which were a vehicle of God's infinite solicitude for man. His will was written in the stars and transmitted by them, a matter for scientific observation; but God might also on occasion work directly and miraculously. It was a world full of wonders, strange peoples, and strange beasts, but it was on the whole a pleasant world, gay with color and the sound of bells, a world built for man

as a proving ground to test his deserts for a better. We must, however, attempt more than the construction of a pretty picture, nor need we give room to philosophic doubts about superstition and sanitation and the waywardness of human nature in professing one thing and doing quite another. We must attempt to define and to suggest (we can do no more) the great variety of a period so long, and how different it looked to ages other than our own; and we must try to pick out those things that have endured.

Man's way of seeking to organize his memories of "the vast backward and abysm of time" is to set up chronological divisions, periods, eras, ages, and the like. It is the fate of such divisions to take on a substance and a sanctity which dignify them quite beyond the modest ends of convenience which they were originated to serve. So it is with the term "Middle Ages" and the adjective "medieval." Strictly as terms they are not very old; the former seems to have arisen in the seventeenth century, the latter in the nineteenth. But the idea which the terms seek to clothe was in existence, expressed in various experimental phrases in Latin, as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century. To a man of that day, and indeed for two or three centuries later, a backward glance over the course of time would reveal a lapse or interval of a thousand years, and more, betwixt the day that the ancient Roman world had sunk beneath successive waves of barbarian invasion and the time when a few earnest souls, humanists as they called themselves, lawyers, papal secretaries, teachers, sought to recover, mainly through its literature, the ancient Roman way of life.

To these men of the fifteenth century, in their zeal for the new learning (the term "Renaissance" was not born till much later, at the very end of the seventeenth century) the years between appeared an interval uniformly dark and deformed. Since it was before the advancing Goths that Rome had fallen, its original brightness had been eclipsed, as it seemed, by a thick Gothic night, and "Gothic" became a term that might be applied indiscriminately and not without contempt to such strange shapes as emerged from the enveloping darkness, whether a characteristic form of architecture, a particular style of black and curly letter, the jingle of rhymed verse, or an adventurous and not wholly credible kind of romance. To men of the new learning the flexible Latin that had been spoken and written for a thousand years seemed barbarously ungrammatical. The language of Cicero was to be restored. The official philosophy of the schools was to them a heap of beaten straw to be bundled out, and Plato was to stand in the room of a so much deformed Aristotle and his dunces. If, in addition, one were of a religious or political way of thinking—the two went much together—one might perhaps see a universal Church and a universal Empire not merely as theories outworn and broken down, but positively as sources of menace to a new theory, and an increasingly important fact, that of national independence. However little of all this was really the invention of the fifteenth century—

and a good deal of it had been long brewing; however imperfectly a new order of things was realized, and however much of the old order survived, even to our own day indeed, a friend of the new learning in the fifteenth and two following centuries might persuade himself that since proud Rome had fallen most of what had happened had been bad, and what had come down from a long era of darkness and ignorance had best be swept away when it could not be disregarded. Something of this view of a European middle age as a long, troubled sleep has persisted to our own day, especially among those primarily concerned with literature.

Such a view was not intended to be impartial. It was a fighting program, a basis for scholastic or religious reform. It chose to overlook a good many things, to ignore the fact that the Middle Ages, having been lived through, were not so readily to be lived down. Much survived: a Church, for example; and religious thinking and ceremonial remain still essentially medieval. For this reason it is difficult even now to get a dispassionate view of the Middle Ages; in most people's view they would be cried up or cried down in accordance with an inherited tradition. In less controversial fields, though the age of chivalry may be dead, laughed away if one will by Cervantes, still its ideals of social conduct have not wholly lost their force in losing something of their form. We still on occasions strive to be gentlemen. We still fall in love; and we do so responsive to conventions that derive from the Middle Ages, which may be said to have invented romantic love. In an age of mass production and capitalist exploitation medieval craftsmanship and its organization into guilds appear retrospectively attractive. In increasing numbers we frequent universities — a characteristic institution of the later Middle Ages. And our universities, with huge classes lectured to by professors, are in several ways more like those of the Middle Ages than were the colleges of a century and more ago with their primarily literary discipline, a discipline that in the sixteenth century was called "new." Finally, it is to the Middle Ages that European nations today look for the guarantees of the permanence and significance of their individuality. The reader of these volumes may spend a profitable hour in observing how not only the older countries of Europe, but even more noticeably those to which the Great War gave a new intensity of consciousness, search the medieval past to discover their own identity therein, to recover and celebrate their heroes, to reinvigorate their languages from ancient sources, and to rejoice in the possession of institutions, customs, traits which legitimately descend to them.

Thus the Middle Ages are an object of perpetual rediscovery; not merely a matter of survivals but also of revivals. The later eighteenth century played with Gothic architecture, the earlier nineteenth "restored" it, and the later nineteenth began to understand it. The interest in the vernacular literature of the Middle Ages, in ballad and romance, went through similar stages. With the mid-nineteenth century the painters before Raphael came into vogue. The

twentieth century began to find out something about medieval secular music (its hymns had never ceased to be sung), and scholastic philosophy became the object of renewed study. Thus the clouds have a little rolled back and the dark ages received a degree of illumination. Pinnacles and depressions appear, and a stream of human life, vivid and livable, flows continuously without much regard to the little divisions of the chronologer.

When the Middle Ages begin, therefore, and when they end, if indeed they have ended, does not perhaps greatly matter. Certainly the Church, which gives unity to the period, was the creation of the ancient Roman genius for organization, and belongs to a time which historians still celebrate as the grandeur that was Rome. In the arrangement of the volumes of this series the great formulator of Christian doctrine, St. Augustine, has been given a place in the volume devoted to Roman literature; and so also Boëthius, the "last of the Romans," senator and Christian, the teacher of the early Middle Ages. Similarly, deep within the Middle Ages appear the signs of that revolt, those weaknesses of human nature which were destined to destroy the medieval scheme of things, as thoroughly philosophical a social arrangement, it might be said, as has yet come anywhere near to establishing itself. If there was in the Middle Ages a stern intellectualism, there was also revolt; pietistic or mystic, in a St. Francis or a St. Bonaventura; cynical, in the students' songs in praise of Goliath or in the bourgeois cleverness of 'Reynard the Fox'; revolt also of a sensitive soul or a sensitive pocketbook against a bureaucracy too frequently in its individual representatives lewd or corrupt; revolt, finally, of a growing sense of nationalism. Once more, then, it is an instructive accident that in this series of volumes not only St. Thomas and St. Francis, but Dante likewise, who gave supreme literary expression to the medieval struggle to hold two complete worlds in perfect balance, should find themselves caught up in a volume devoted to Italian literature. Froissart, who looked out upon the brave pageantry of battle-field and tournament, and Villon, who pierced beneath it, open the story of French literature. And the Cid and Alfonso the Wise do the same for Spanish literature, the one typifying the struggle against the Crescent, the irresistible spread of a European civilization through the world, and the other symbolizing the growth of science, which from the twelfth century onward, expanding and accelerating, has almost in our own day begun a new transformation of human society.

Two things recent scholarship has made abundantly plain: first, that the centuries between the fifth and the fifteenth form by no means a uniform level, but are marked by peaks and depressions, advances and partial subsidences, quickenings of interest now in one field, now in another; and second, that there can be drawn no sharp division between literature in Latin and literature in the various vernaculars. Not only was Latin the medium of educated men everywhere; anyone composing in one of the vernaculars would not feel called upon to clear his mind of all recollection of such schooling

as he had had. The Latin grammar, with its quotations from classical authors, schoolbooks like "Cato" and "Theodulus" and "Æsop," and the services of the Church furnish a common background even for those who had not climbed very high in the tower of wisdom. Nor had Vergil, Ovid, the Satires of Horace and of Juvenal, the philosophizings of Cicero and Seneca, the epics of Lucan and of Statius, at any time been without readers. The picturesque aspects of the medieval tradition, "Master" Vergil the magician, "Senek" and his wisdom, "romances" of Thebes, Troy, Æneas, Alexander, Julius Cæsar, all the stir and color that the Middle Ages cheerfully read into what they called the "matter of antiquity," should not be permitted to draw our eyes from the fact that certain of the Latin classics were in all ages devotedly read and influential in the steady upbuilding of a "modern" literature both in the Latin tongue and in the vernaculars. Even in the case of folk-song and popular drama a kind of underground tradition coming down from earliest Rome may have as a matter of fact been more influential than scholarship will ever be wise enough, with the materials at its disposal, completely to demonstrate.

Certainly in the world of classical antiquity the Middle Ages made themselves marvelously at their ease. The English language chances to preserve some of their familiar names for these ancient authors that had long been loved, Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Terence, and so on. Some have since exchanged their familiar names for their more resonant classical titles, Boëthius, Seneca, Statius, instead of the old Boece, Senek, and Stace; but those writers whom the Middle Ages knew little or not at all, Lucretius, Plautus, Tacitus, Catullus, may be recognized as such by their lack of any more homely appellation. Out of this classical background the Middle Ages made a world homelike and to their taste; a world of joustings and love-making in courtly kind, a world in which the pagan gods, suspect alike on grounds of theology, morals, and of plain credibility, were supplanted by agencies to which one could lend rational belief, such as the influences of the planets or magic art. The heroes of antiquity so conceived could take their place with Charlemagne and his peers, whose stories were the delight of the thronged pilgrim roads, and with King Arthur and his knights, who could be made to charm a French princess with their courtly way of love or to appeal to an English king as furnishing a sort of national hero for his composite people made up of French, English, and Welsh. A Latin world, in short, which saw its past as eternally contemporaneous with itself.

From this Latin tradition, fortified by long practice, came the strong sense that literature should somehow contrive to be instructive. Not that there was no purely recreative literature — such a tale as one would chuckle over with one's friends might indeed be written down in verse (*fabliaux*). But almost anything, under compulsion, could be moralized to some purpose or other. "And St. Paul saith," as Chaucer put it, "that all that writen is, to our

doctrine it is ywrit, ywis." Centuries of spiritual interpreting of the Scriptures, and of the *Æneid*, left ingenuity never at a loss to find that more was meant than met the ear. Besides this allegory of interpretation, which Dante with confounding ingenuity built into his 'Comedy,' there is the allegory of abstraction, of which the most popular example was the 'Romance of the Rose.' Scholastic education was a training in abstraction and generalization, and minds so trained delighted to pierce to the general amidst the engaging particulars with which literary description or stage representation inevitably cloaked it. Even Petrarch, who despised dialectic as dialectic, reveled in it as poetry, and so did his followers long after the Middle Ages are supposed to have closed. The modern mind is apt to find the game dull, especially if the rules are not understood. Another reason why the modern reader is sometimes repelled by medieval literature is that one book appears over and over again in many different forms, and that book is the encyclopedia. It was an intensely practical age and it loved information. The desire to be compendious and informing, to be faithful to accepted authorities, kept many an author — and many a contemporary reader — from giving thought to the possibility of dullness. The modern reader, if he disrelishes piety and didacticism, at least in form to him unaccustomed or too familiar, may yet compensate himself with abundant song and story which remain enduringly fresh and engaging, with popular ballad, romance, or lyric.

Most of the literature represented in this book comes from the latter part of the Middle Ages. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries form a period of quickened energies, and literary expression in the vernaculars went hand in hand with the founding of the universities, the founding of the mendicant orders, the recovery, with the aid of Arabs and Jews, of the bulk of Aristotle's works, the revival of the Roman law, the development of an official philosophy of the schools, and the creation of a new Latin literature. If we take a period of say from 1160 to 1277, from the beginning of the work of Chrestien de Troyes to Jean de Meun's completion of the 'Romance of the Rose,' we should find in these little more than a hundred years most of the things that make up this volume. The 'Song of Roland' would be a little earlier, Anglo-Saxon or Old English literature considerably earlier, Chaucer considerably later. But within the hundred years would fall all but the earliest work of the Provençal poets, and the Middle High German poets Eilhart, Hartman, Ulrich, Wolfram, Göttfried, Walther. It is the period of the Prose Edda and of the reduction to its present form of the Poetic Edda. It is the period when the great Irish collections were forming, and toward the end of it the voices of the Italian singers were beginning to be heard, and English, eclipsed by the Conquest, was making good its claim to be a national language, already justified by the production of some excellent literature.

This is only a small portion of time in the whole Middle Ages, though for us it is the most colorful, the most significant — the age of castles and cathe-

drals, of a tale of Arthur in the hall and the tinkling of a lute in my lady's bower, a clever bit of reasoning in the schools, or for a quieter hour some sweet miracle of the Virgin. Back of this lie many sterner centuries, less intellectually alert, less polished, but at moments heroic. Retrospectively, at any rate, there is an epic quality not only in Roland or Cuchulinn or Beowulf or the gods and giants of the North, but likewise in the men who in this dark vale of trouble and of tears drew upon ancient learning to build up a new way of life. Jerome in his cell translating the Scriptures; Ambrose putting his administrative gifts at the service of the lately officially recognized Church; Augustine formulating Christian doctrine out of human experience so embracing that almost any man can find in it what he is searching for; and Patrick planting learning in distant Ireland whence it was destined to send back missionaries through Europe — these are epic figures. And following them, in the sixth century, men like Boëthius and Isidore of Seville, snatching up what might be lightly carried as on a dangerous journey, and Benedict founding his refuge on the citadel of Monte Cassino — heroic preservers of what they could. Epic, too, is the eastward drift through Europe of the Irish missionaries in the seventh and eighth centuries, reducing the English language to writing and establishing in and around York a tradition which produced Bede, the historian of the English people and the foremost scholar of his time, and in the next century Alcuin, whom Charlemagne invited to aid in restoring learning on the Continent. To this Carolingian Renaissance, as it has come to be called, we owe the preservation of nearly all that we have of classical literature and the development of that beautiful handwriting to which the humanists later returned and which forms the basis of the type in which this book is printed.

Thus the reader who can permit himself the luxury of surveying these ages as a pageant is gazing upon something of which he is a part and which is a part of himself. The march of western Christian culture, drawing to itself what it felt was needful, was not always at a uniform rate of speed, but it was continuous, and this tradition represents the larger part of the inheritance of the present, the glass in which, however darkly, it sees. In the heroic literatures of the North, besides the pleasure they give merely by being largely and simply heroic, it is not fanciful to look for other contributions to the modern inheritance — the contempt for suicide, the exaltation of women, the love of playing the game in accordance with rules that may on occasion call for fantastic personal sacrifice. Finally, from the twelfth century on, the spectator passes into a delightful world, familiar yet constantly stimulating, and at the end of these Middle Ages may fall, if he will, into the roadside company of Chaucer, the sweetest and wisest singer in the long tradition since of English poetry.

HARRY MORGAN AYRES

## HISTORICAL EVENTS

## LITERARY DATES

- 325 Council of Nicæa
- 433-453 Attila King of the Huns  
476 Odoacer takes Rome
- 493-526 Theodoric ruler of Italy  
529 Benedict founds monastery at  
Monte Cassino  
c. 570-632 Mohammed  
590-604 Gregory Pope  
597 Augustine's Mission to England  
634 King Oswald's conversion of  
Northumbria  
664 Synod of Whitby
- 732 Defeat of Moslem power at  
Tours
- 800 Coronation of Charlemagne at  
Rome  
871-900 Alfred the Great King  
1066 Norman Conquest of England  
1073-1085 Gregory VII Pope (Hil-  
debrand)
- 1096 Beginning of First Crusade
- 1144 Fall of Edessa and beginning  
of Second Crusade  
1152-1190 Frederick Barbarossa Em-  
peror
- 1170-1221 St. Dominic

- c. 340-397 St. Ambrose  
c. 340-419 St. Jerome  
354-430 St. Augustine  
c. 389-c. 461 St. Patrick
- c. 480-c. 525 Boëthius
- c. 560-636 Isidore of Seville
- 670 Caedmon *fl.*  
673 (?) - 735 Bede  
Early 8th century *Beowulf*
- c. 735-804 Alcuin  
8th century Cynewulf
- 1079-1142 Abélard  
1080 (?) - 1260 (?) *Mabinogion*
- c. 1100 *Chanson de Roland*  
1100 (?) - 1154 Geoffrey of Mon-  
mouth
- c. 1152 Eleanor of Aquitaine  
1160-1175 Chrestien de Troyes *fl.*  
1167-1184 Marie de France *fl.*  
c. 1170-1230 Walther von der Vo-  
gelweide

HISTORICAL EVENTS

- 1181 (?)–1226 St. Francis  
 1187 Saladin takes Jerusalem, bringing about Third Crusade  
 1198–1216 Innocent III Pope  
  
 1204 Constantinople captured by the Crusaders  
 1207–1244 Albigensian Crusade  
 1215 Magna Carta  
 1218–1250 Frederick II (of Sicily) Emperor  
  
 1244 Jerusalem taken by Turks  
 1252–1282 Alfonso X (the Wise) King of Castile  
 1259–1294 Kublai Khan, Mongol Emperor  
 1265 First English Parliament  
  
 1337–1453 Hundred Years' War  
  
 1453 Capture of Constantinople by the Turks  
 1492 Columbus' First Voyage to America

LITERARY DATES

- c. 1175 Beginnings of University of Paris  
 1179–1241 Snorri Sturluson, *Prose Edda*  
  
 c. 1200 *Nibelungenlied*; *Poema del Cid*  
 c. 1203–1215 Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*  
 c. 1204 Layamon's *Brut*  
  
 c. 1225–1230 Guillaume de Lorris, *Romance of the Rose, First Part*  
 1225–1274 St. Thomas Aquinas  
  
 1265–1321 Dante  
 1271–1291 Journeys of Marco Polo  
 c. 1275–1280 Jean de Meun, *Romance of the Rose, Second Part*  
 c. 1325–1408 Gower  
  
 1340 (?)–1400 Chaucer  
 1362–1393 Three versions of *Piers Plowman*  
 c. 1422–1491 Caxton, first English printer  
 1485 Malory's *Morte Darthur*

## THE BALLAD

THE popular ballad, as it is understood for the purpose of these selections, is a narrative in lyric form, with no traces of individual authorship, and is preserved mainly by oral tradition. In its earliest stages it was meant to be sung by a crowd, and got its name from the dance to which it furnished the sole musical accompaniment. In these primitive communities the ballad was doubtless chanted by the entire folk, in festivals mainly of a religious character. Explorers still meet something of the sort in savage tribes: and children's games preserve among us some relics of this protoplasmic form of verse-making, in which the single poet or artist was practically unknown, and spontaneous, improvised verses arose out of the occasion itself; in which the whole community took part; and in which the beat of foot — along with the gesture which expressed narrative elements of the song — was inseparable from the words and the melody. This native growth of song, in which the chorus or refrain, the dance of a festal multitude, and the spontaneous nature of the words, were vital conditions, gradually faded away before the advance of cultivated verse and the vigor of production in what one may call poetry of the schools. Very early in the history of the ballad, a demand for more art must have called out or at least emphasized the artist, the poet, who chanted new verses while the throng kept up the refrain or burden. Moreover, as interest was concentrated upon the words or story, people began to feel that both dance and melody were separable if not alien features; and thus they demanded the composed and recited ballad, to the harm and ultimate ruin of that spontaneous song for the festal, dancing crowd. Still, even when artistry had found a footing in ballad verse, it long remained mere agent and mouthpiece for the folk; the communal character of the ballad was maintained in form and matter. Events of interest were sung in almost contemporary and entirely improvised verse; and the resulting ballads, carried over the borders of their community and passed down from generation to generation, served as newspaper to their own times and as chronicle to posterity. It is the kind of song to which Tacitus bears witness as the sole form of history among the early Germans; and it is evident that such a stock of ballads must have furnished considerable raw material to the epic. Ballads, in whatever original shape, went to the making of the English 'Beowulf,' of the German 'Nibelungenlied.' Moreover, a study of dramatic poetry leads one back to similar communal origins. What is loosely called a "chorus" — originally, as the name implies, a dance — out of which older

forms of the drama were developed, could be traced back to identity with primitive forms of the ballad. The purely lyrical ballad, even, the *chanson* of the people, so rare in English but so abundant among other races, is evidently a growth from the same root.

If, now, we assume for this root the name of communal poem, and if we bear in mind the dominant importance of the individual, the artist, in advancing stages of poetry, it is easy to understand why for civilized and lettered communities the ballad has ceased to have any vitality whatever. Under modern conditions the making of ballads is a closed account. For our times poetry means something written by a poet, and not something sung more or less spontaneously by a dancing throng. Indeed, paper and ink, the agents of preservation in the case of ordinary verse, are for ballads the agents of destruction. The broadside press of three centuries and more ago, while it rescued here and there a genuine ballad, poured out a mass of vulgar imitations which not only displaced and destroyed the ballad of oral tradition, but brought contempt upon good and bad alike. Poetry of the people, to which our ballad belongs, is a thing of the past. Even rude and distant communities, like those of Afghanistan, cannot give us the primitive conditions. The communal ballad is rescued, when rescued at all, by the fragile chances of a written copy or of oral tradition; and we are obliged to study it under terms of artistic poetry: that is, we are forced to take through the eye and the judgment what was meant for the ear and immediate sensation. Poetry *for* the people, however, "popular poetry" in the modern phrase, is a very different affair. Street songs, vulgar rhymes, or even improvisations of the concert-halls, tawdry and sentimental stuff — these things are sundered by the world's width from poetry of the people, from the folk in verse, whether it echo in a great epos which chants the clash of empires or linger in a ballad of the country-side sung under the village linden. For this ballad is a part of the poetry which comes from the people as a whole, from a homogeneous folk, large or small; while the song of street or concert-hall is deliberately composed for a class, a section, of the community. It would therefore be better to use some other term than "popular" when we wish to specify the ballad of tradition, and so avoid all taint of vulgarity and the trivial. Nor must we go to the other extreme. Those high-born people who figure in traditional ballads — Childe Waters, Lady Maisry, and the rest — do not require us to assume composition in aristocratic circles; for the lower classes of the people in ballad days had no separate literature, and a ballad of the folk belonged to the community as a whole. The same habit of thought, the same standard of action, ruled alike the noble and his meanest retainer. Oral transmission, the test of the ballad, is of course nowhere possible save in such an unlettered community. Since all critics are at one in regard to this homogeneous character of the folk with whom and out of whom these songs had their birth, one is justified in removing all

doubt from the phrase by speaking not of the popular ballad but of the communal ballad, the ballad of a community.

With regard to the making of a ballad, one must repeat a caution, hinted already, and made doubly important by a vicious tendency in the study of all phases of culture. It is a vital mistake to explain primitive conditions by exact analogy with conditions of modern savagery and barbarism. Certain conclusions, always guarded and cautious to a degree, may indeed be drawn; but it is folly to insist that what now goes on among shunted races, belated detachments in the great march of culture, must have gone on among the dominant and mounting peoples who had reached the same external conditions of life. The homogeneous and unlettered state of the ballad-makers is not to be put on a level with the ignorance of barbarism, nor explained by the analogy of songs among modern savage tribes. Fortunately we have better material. The making of a ballad by a community can be illustrated from a case recorded by Pastor Lyngbye in his invaluable account of life on the Faroe Islands more than a century ago. Not only had the islanders used from most ancient times their traditional and narrative songs as music for the dance, but they had also maintained the old fashion of making a ballad. In the winter, says Lyngbye, dancing is their chief amusement and is an affair of the entire community. At such a dance, one or more persons begin to sing; then all who are present join in the ballad, or at least in the refrain. As they dance, they show by their gestures and expression that they follow with eagerness the course of the story which they are singing. More than this, the ballad is often a spontaneous product of the occasion. A fisherman, who has had some recent mishap with his boat, is pushed by stalwart comrades into the middle of the throng, while the dancers sing verses about him and his lack of skill, verses improvised on the spot and with a catching and clamorous refrain. If these verses win favor, says Lyngbye, they are repeated from year to year, with slight additions or corrections, and become a permanent ballad. Bearing in mind the extraordinary readiness to improvise shown even in these days by peasants in every part of Europe, we thus gain some definite notion about the spontaneous and communal elements which went to the making of the best type of primitive verse; for these Faroe islanders were no savages, but simply a homogeneous and isolated folk which still held to the old ways of communal song.

Critics of the ballad, moreover, agree that it has little or no subjective traits, an easy inference from the conditions just described. There is no individuality lurking behind the words of the ballad, and above all, no evidence of that individuality in the form of sentiment. Sentiment and individuality are the very essence of modern poetry, and the direct result of individualism in verse. Given a poet, sentiment — and it may be noble and precious enough — is sure to follow. But the ballad, an epic in little, forces one's attention to the object, the scene, the story, and away from the maker.

The king sits in Dumferling town

begins one of the noblest of all ballads; while one of the greatest of modern poems opens with something personal and pathetic, keynote to all that follows: —

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
My sense . . .

Even when a great poet essays the ballad, either he puts sentiment into it, or else he keeps sentiment out of it by a *tour de force*. Admirable and noble as one must call the conclusion of an artistic ballad such as Tennyson's 'Revenge,' it is altogether different from the conclusion of such a communal ballad as 'Sir Patrick Spens.' That subtle quality of the ballad which lies in solution with the story and which — as in 'Childe Maurice' or 'Babylon' or 'Edward' — compels in us sensations akin to those called out by the sentiment of the poet, is a wholly impersonal if strangely effective quality, far removed from the corresponding elements of the poem of art. At first sight, one might say that Browning's dramatic lyrics had this impersonal quality. But compare the close of 'Give a Rouse,' chorus and all, with the close of 'Childe Maurice,' that swift and relentless stroke of pure tragedy which called out the enthusiasm of so great a critic as Gray.

The narrative of the communal ballad is full of leaps and omissions; the style is simple to a fault; the diction is spontaneous and free. Assonance frequently takes the place of rhyme, and a word often rhymes with itself. There is a lack of poetic adornment in the style quite as conspicuous as the lack of reflection and moralizing in the matter. Metaphor and simile are rare and when found are for the most part standing phrases common to all the ballads; there is never poetry for poetry's sake. Iteration is the chief mark of ballad style; and the favorite form of this effective figure is what one may call incremental repetition. The question is repeated with the answer; each increment in a series of related facts has a stanza for itself, identical, save for the new fact, with the other stanzas. 'Babylon' furnishes good instances of this progressive iteration. Moreover, the ballad differs from earlier English epics in that it invariably has stanzas and rhyme; of the two forms of stanza, the two-line stanza with a refrain is probably older than the stanza with four or six lines.

This necessary quality of the stanza points to the origin of the ballad in song; but longer ballads, such as those that make up the 'Gest of Robin Hood,' an epic in little, were not sung as lyrics or to aid the dance, but were either chanted in a monotonous fashion or else recited outright. Chappell, in his admirable work on old English music ('Music of the Olden Time,' ii, 790), names a third class of "characteristic airs of England," the "historical and very long ballads . . . invariably of simple construction, usually plaintive.

. . . They were rarely if ever used for dancing." Most of the longer ballads, however, were doubtless given by one person in a sort of recitative; this is the case with modern ballads of Russia and Serbia, where the bystanders now and then join in a chorus. Precisely in the same way ballads were divorced from the dance, originally their vital condition; but in the refrain, which is attached to so many ballads, one finds an element which has survived from those earliest days of communal song.

Of oldest communal poetry no actual ballad has come down to us. Hints and even fragments, however, are pointed out in ancient records, mainly as the material or chronicle or legend. In the Bible (Numbers xxi, 17), where "Israel sang this song," we are not going too far when we regard the fragment as part of a communal ballad. "Spring up, O well: sing ye unto it: the princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves." Deborah's song has something of the communal note; and when Miriam dances and sings with her maidens, one is reminded of the many ballads made by dancing and singing bands of women in medieval Europe, for instance, the song made in the seventh century to the honor of St. Faro, and "sung by the women as they danced and clapped their hands." The question of ancient Greek ballads, and their relation to the epic, is not to be discussed here; nor can we make more than an allusion to the theory of Niebuhr that the early part of Livy is founded on old Roman ballads. A popular discussion of this matter may be found in Macaulay's preface to his own 'Lays of Ancient Rome.' The ballads of modern Europe are a survival of older communal poetry, more or less influenced by artistic and individual conditions of authorship, but wholly impersonal, and with an appeal to our interest which seems to come from a throng and not from the solitary poet. Attention was early called to the ballads of Spain; printed at first as broadsides, they were gathered into a volume as early as 1550. On the other hand, ballads were neglected in France until very recent times; for specimens of the French ballad, and for an account of it, the reader should consult Professor Crane's 'Chansons Populaires de France,' New York, 1891. It is with ballads of the Germanic race, however, that we are now concerned. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, the Faroe Islands; Scotland and England; the Netherlands and Germany: all of these countries offer us admirable specimens of the ballad. Particularly, the great collections of Grundtvig ('Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser') for Denmark, and of Child ('The English and Scottish Popular Ballads') for our own tongue, show how common descent or borrowing connects the individual ballads of these groups. "Almost every Norwegian, Swedish, or Icelandic ballad," says Grundtvig, "is found in a Danish version of Scandinavian ballads; moreover, a larger number can be found in English and Scottish versions than in German or Dutch versions." Again, we find certain national preferences in the character of the ballads which have come down to us. Scandinavia kept the old heroic lays

(Kæmpeviser); Germany wove them into her epic, as witness the Nibelungen Lay; but England and Scotland have none of them in any shape. So, too, the mythic ballad, scantily represented in English, and practically unknown in Germany, abounds in Scandinavian collections. The Faroe Islands and Norway, as Grundtvig tells us, show the best record for ballads preserved by oral tradition; while noble ladies of Denmark, three or four centuries ago, did high service to ballad literature by making collections in manuscript of the songs current then in the castle as in the cottage.

For England, one is compelled to begin the list of known ballads with the thirteenth century. 'The Battle of Maldon,' composed in the last decade of the tenth century, though spirited enough and full of communal vigor, has no stanzaic structure, follows in meter and style the rules of the Old English epic, and is only a ballad by courtesy; about the ballads used a century or two later by historians of England, we can do nothing but guess; and there is no firm ground under the critic's foot until he comes to the Robin Hood ballads, which Professor Child assigns to the thirteenth century. 'The Battle of Otterburn' (1388) opens a series of ballads based on actual events and stretching into the eighteenth century. Barring the Robin Hood cycle — an epic constructed from this attractive material lies before us in the famous 'Gest of Robin Hood,' printed as early as 1489 — the chief sources of the collector are the Percy Manuscript, "written just before 1650" — on which, not without omissions and additions, the bishop based his 'Reliques,' first published in 1765 — and the oral traditions of Scotland, which Professor Child refers to "the last one hundred and thirty years." Information about the individual ballads, their sources, history, literary connections, and above all, their varying texts, must be sought in the noble work of Professor F. J. Child. For present purposes, a word or two of general information must suffice. As to origins, there is a wide range. The Church furnished its legend, as in 'St. Stephen'; romance contributed the story of 'Thomas Rymer'; and the light, even cynical *fabliau* is responsible for 'The Boy and the Mantle.' Ballads which occur in many tongues either may have a common origin or else may owe their manifold versions, as in the case of popular tales, to a love of borrowing; and here, of course, we get the hint of wider issues. For the most part, however, a ballad tells some moving story, preferably of fighting and of love. Tragedy is the dominant note; and English ballads of the best type deal with those elements of domestic disaster so familiar in the great dramas of literature, in the story of Orestes, or of Hamlet, or of the Cid. Such are 'Edward,' 'Lord Randal,' 'The Two Brothers,' 'The Two Sisters,' 'Childe Maurice,' 'Bewick and Graham,' 'Clerk Colven,' 'Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard,' 'Glasgerion,' and many others. Another group of ballads, represented by 'The Baron of Brackley' and 'Captain Car,' give a faithful picture of the feuds and ceaseless warfare in Scotland and on the border. A few fine ballads — 'Sweet William's Ghost,' 'The Wife of Usher's Well' — touch

upon the supernatural. Of the romantic ballads, 'Childe Waters' shows us the higher, and 'Young Beichan' the lower, but still sound and communal type. Incipient dramatic tendencies mark 'Edward' and 'Lord Randal'; while, on the other hand, a lyric note almost carries 'Bonnie George Campbell' out of balladry. Finally, it is to be noted that in 'The Nut-Brown Maid,' which many would unhesitatingly refer to this class of poetry, we have no ballad at all, but a dramatic lyric, probably written by a woman, and with a special plea in the background.

F. B. GUMMERE

### ROBIN HOOD AND GUY OF GISBORNE <sup>1</sup>

**W**HEN shawes <sup>2</sup> beene sheene,<sup>3</sup> and shradds <sup>4</sup> full fayre,  
And leeves both large and longe,  
It is merry, walking in the fayre forrest,  
To heare the small birds' songe.

The woodweele <sup>5</sup> sang, and wold not cease,  
Amongst the leaves a lyne;<sup>6</sup>  
And it is by two wight <sup>7</sup> yeomen,  
By deare God, that I meane. . . .

"Me thought they <sup>8</sup> did me beate and binde,  
And tooke my bow me fro;  
If I bee Robin alive in this lande,  
I'll be wrocken <sup>9</sup> on both them two."

<sup>1</sup> This ballad is a good specimen of the Robin Hood Cycle, and is remarkable for its many proverbial and alliterative phrases. A few lines have been lost between stanzas 2 and 3. Gisborne is a "market-town in the West Riding of the County of York, on the borders of Lancashire." For the probable tune of the ballad, see Chappell's 'Popular Music of the Olden Time,' ii, 397.

<sup>2</sup> Woods, groves. — This touch of description at the outset is common in our old ballads, as well as in the medieval German popular lyric, and may perhaps spring from the old "summer-lays" and chorus of pagan times.

<sup>3</sup> Beautiful; German. *schön*.

<sup>4</sup> Coppices or openings in a wood.

<sup>5</sup> In some glossaries the woodpecker, but here of course a song-bird — perhaps, as Chappell suggests, the woodlark.

<sup>6</sup> A, on; *lyne*, lime or linden.

<sup>7</sup> Sturdy, brave.

<sup>8</sup> Robin now tells of a dream in which "they" (= the two "wight yeomen," who are Guy and, as Professor Child suggests, the Sheriff of Nottingham) maltreat him; and he thus foresees trouble "from two quarters."

<sup>9</sup> Revenged.

"Sweavens<sup>10</sup> are swift, master," quoth John,  
 "As the wind that blowes ore a hill;  
 For if it be never soe lowde this night,  
 Tomorrow it may be still."

"Buske ye, bowne ye,<sup>11</sup> my merry men all,  
 For John shall go with me;  
 For I'll goe seeke yond wight yeomen  
 In greenwood where they bee."

They cast on their gowne of greene,  
 A shooting gone are they,  
 Until they came to the merry greenwood,  
 Where they had gladdest bee;  
 There were they ware of a wight yeoman,  
 His body leaned to a tree.

A sword and a dagger he wore by his side,  
 Had beene many a man's bane,<sup>12</sup>  
 And he was cladd in his capull-hyde,<sup>13</sup>  
 Topp, and tayle, and mayne.

"Stand you still, master," quoth Litle John,  
 "Under this trusty tree,  
 And I will goe to yond wight yeoman,  
 To know his meaning trulye."

"A, John, by me thou setts noe store,  
 And that's a farley<sup>14</sup> thinge;  
 How oft send I my men before,  
 And tarry myselfe behinde?"

"It is noe cunning a knave to ken,  
 And a man but heare him speake;  
 And it were not for bursting of my bowe,  
 John, I wold thy head breake."

But often words they breeden bale,  
 That parted Robin and John;  
 John is gone to Barnesdale,  
 That gates<sup>15</sup> he knows eche one.

<sup>10</sup> Dreams.

<sup>11</sup> Tautological phrase, "prepare and make ready."

<sup>12</sup> Murder, destruction.

<sup>13</sup> Horse's hide.

<sup>14</sup> Strange.

<sup>15</sup> Paths.

And when hee came to Barnesdale,  
 Great heavinesse there hee hadd;  
 He found two of his fellowes  
 Were slaine both in a slade,<sup>16</sup>

And Scarlett a foote flyinge was,  
 Over stockes and stone,  
 For the sheriffe with seven score men  
 Fast after him is gone.

"Yet one shoote I'll shoote," sayes Litle John,  
 "With Crist his might and mayne;  
 I'll make yond fellow that flyes soe fast  
 To be both glad and faine."

John bent up a good viewe bow,<sup>17</sup>  
 And fetteled<sup>18</sup> him to shoote;  
 The bow was made of a tender boughe,  
 And fell downe to his foote.

"Woe worth<sup>19</sup> thee, wicked wood," sayd Litle John,  
 "That ere thou grew on a tree!  
 For this day thou are my bale,  
 My boote<sup>20</sup> when thou shold bee! "

This shoote it was but looselye shott,  
 The arrowe flew in vaine,  
 And it mett one of the sheriffe's men;  
 Good William a Trent was slaine.

It had beene better for William a Trent  
 To hange upon a gallowe  
 Then for to lye in the greenwoode,  
 There slaine with an arrowe.

And it is sayed, when men be mett,  
 Six can doe more than three:  
 And they have tane Litle John,  
 And bound him fast to a tree.

<sup>16</sup> Green valley between woods.

<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the yew-bow.

<sup>18</sup> Made ready.

<sup>19</sup> "Woe be to thee." *Worth* is the old subjunctive present of an exact English equivalent to the modern German *werden*.

<sup>20</sup> Note these alliterative phrases. *Boote*, remedy.

"Thou shalt be drawn by dale and downe," quoth the sheriffe,<sup>21</sup>  
 "And hanged hye on a hill: "  
 "But thou may fayle," quoth Litle John  
 "If it be Christ's owne will."

Let us leave talking of Litle John,  
 For hee is bound fast to a tree,  
 And talke of Guy and Robin Hood  
 In the green woode where they bee.

How these two yeomen together they mett,  
 Under the leaves of lyne,  
 To see what marchandise they made  
 Even at that same time.

"Good morrow, good fellow," quoth Sir Guy;  
 "Good morrow, good fellow," quoth hee;  
 "Methinkes by this bow thou beares in thy hand,  
 A good archer thou seems to bee."

"I am wilfull of my way,"<sup>22</sup> quoth Sir Guy,  
 "And of my morning tyde: "  
 "I'll lead thee through the wood," quoth Robin,  
 "Good fellow, I'll be thy guide."

"I seeke an outlaw," quoth Sir Guy,  
 "Men call him Robin Hood;  
 I had rather meet with him upon a day  
 Then forty pound of golde."

"If you tow mett, it wold be seene whether were better  
 Afore yee did part awaye;  
 Let us some other pastime find,  
 Good fellow, I thee pray.

"Let us some other masteryes make,  
 And we will walke in the woods even;  
 Wee may chance meet with Robin Hood  
 At some unsett steven."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> As Percy noted, this "quoth the sheriffe," was probably added by some explainer. The reader, however, must remember the license of slurring or contracting the syllables of a word, as well as the opposite freedom of expansion. Thus in the second line of stanza 7, *man's* is to be pronounced *man-ēs*.

<sup>22</sup> I have lost my way.

<sup>23</sup> At some unappointed time; by chance.

They cutt them downe the summer shroggs<sup>24</sup>  
 Which grew both under a bryar,  
 And sett them three score rood in twinn,<sup>25</sup>  
 To shoote the prickes<sup>26</sup> full neare.

"Leade on, good fellow," sayd Sir Guye,  
 "Leade on, I doe bidd thee."  
 "Nay, by my faith," quoth Robin Hood,  
 "The leader thou shalt bee."

The first good shoot that Robin ledd,  
 Did not shoote an inch the pricke froe,  
 Guy was an archer good enoughe,  
 But he could neere shoote soe.

The second shoote Sir Guy shott,  
 He shott within the garlande,<sup>27</sup>  
 But Robin Hoode shott it better than hee,  
 For he clove the good pricke-wande.

"God's blessing on thy heart!" sayes Guye,  
 "Goode fellow, thy shooting is goode;  
 For an thy hart be as good as thy hands,  
 Thou were better than Robin Hood.

"Tell me thy name, good fellow," quoth Guye,  
 "Under the leaves of lyne:"  
 "Nay, by my faith," quoth good Robin,  
 "Till thou have told me thine."

"I dwell by dale and downe," quoth Guye,  
 "And I have done many a curst turne;  
 And he that calles me by my right name,  
 Calles me Guye of good Gysborne."

"My dwelling is in the wood," sayes Robin;  
 "By thee I set right nought;  
 My name is Robin Hood of Barnesdale,  
 A fellow thou hast long sought."

<sup>24</sup> Stunted shrubs.

<sup>25</sup> Apart.

<sup>26</sup> "*Prickes* seem to have been the long-range targets, butts the near." — Furnivall.

<sup>27</sup> *Garlande*, perhaps "the ring within which the prick was set"; and the *pricke-wande* perhaps a pole or stick.

He that had neither been a kithe nor kin  
 Might have seene a full fayre sight.  
 To see how together these yeomen went,  
 With blades both browne and bright.

To have seene how these yeomen together fought  
 Two howers of a summer's day;  
 It was neither Guy nor Robin Hood  
 That fettled them to flye away.

Robin was reacheles<sup>28</sup> on a roote,  
 And stumbled at that tyde,  
 And Guy was quicke and nimble with-all,  
 And hitt him ore the left side.

"Ah, deere Lady!" sayd Robin Hoode,  
 "Thou art both mother and may!"<sup>29</sup>  
 I thinke it was never man's destinye  
 To dye before his day."

Robin thought on Our Lady deere,  
 And soone leapt up againe,  
 And thus he came with an awkarde<sup>30</sup> stroke;  
 Good Sir Guye hee has slayne.

He tooke Sir Guy's head by the hayre,  
 And sticked it on his bowe's end:  
 "Thou has beene traytor all thy life,  
 Which thing must have an ende."

Robin pulled forth an Irish kniffe,  
 And nicked Sir Guy in the face,  
 That he was never on<sup>31</sup> a woman borne  
 Could tell who Sir Guye was.

Saies, Lye there, lye there, good Sir Guye,  
 And with me not wrothe;  
 If thou have had the worse stroakes at my hand,  
 Thou shalt have the better cloathe.

<sup>28</sup> Reckless, careless.

<sup>29</sup> Maiden.

<sup>30</sup> Dangerous, or perhaps simply backward, backhanded.

<sup>31</sup> *On* is frequently used for *of*.

Robin did off his gowne of greene,  
 Sir Guye he did it throwe;  
 And he put on that capull-hyde  
 That clad him topp to toe.

"'Tis bowe, the arrowes, and litle horne,  
 And with me now I'll beare;  
 For now I will goe to Barnesdale,  
 To see how my men doe fare."

Robin sett Guye's horne to his mouth,  
 A lowd blast in it he did blow;  
 That beheard the sheriffe of Nottingham,  
 As he leaned under a lowe.<sup>32</sup>

"Hearken! hearken!" sayd the sheriffe,  
 "I heard noe tydings but good;  
 For yonder I heare Sir Guye's horne blowe,  
 For he hath slaine Robin Hood."

"For yonder I heare Sir Guye's horne blowe,  
 It blowes soe well in tyde,  
 For yonder comes that wighty yeoman  
 Cladd in his capull-hyde.

"Come hither, thou good Sir Guy,  
 Aske of mee what thou wilt have:"  
 "I'll none of thy gold," sayes Robin Hood,  
 "Nor I'll none of it have.

"But now I have slaine the master," he sayd,  
 "Let me goe strike the knave;  
 This is all the reward I aske,  
 Nor noe other will I have."

"Thou art a madman," said the sheriffe,  
 "Thou sholdest have had a knight's fee;  
 Seeing thy asking hath been soe badd,  
 Well granted it shall be."

But Litle John heard his master speake,  
 Well he knew that was his steven;<sup>33</sup>  
 "Now shall I be loset," quoth Litle John,  
 "With Christ's might in heaven."

<sup>32</sup> Hillock.

<sup>33</sup> Voice.

But Robin hee hyed him towards Litle John,  
 Hee thought hee wold loose him belive;  
 The sheriffe and all his companye  
 Fast after him did drive.

"Stand abacke! stand abacke!" sayd Robin;  
 "Why draw you mee soe neere?  
 It was never the use in our countrye  
 One's shrift another should heere."

But Robin pulled forth an Irysh kniffe,  
 And losed John hand and foote,  
 And gave him Sir Guye's bow in his hand,  
 And bade it be his boote.

But John tooke Guye's bow in his hand  
 (His arrowes were rawstye <sup>34</sup> by the roote);  
 The sherriffe saw Litle John draw a bow  
 And fettle him to shoote.

Towards his house in Nottingham  
 He fled full fast away,  
 And so did all his companye,  
 Not one behind did stay.

But he cold neither soe fast goe,  
 Nor away soe fast runn,  
 But Litle John, with an arrow broade,  
 Did cleave his heart in twinn.

### THE HUNTING OF THE CHEVIOT

[This is the older and better version of the famous ballad. The younger version was the subject of Addison's papers in the Spectator.]

THE Percy out of Northumberlande,  
 and a vowe to God mayd he  
 That he would hunte in the mountayns  
 of Cheviot within days thre,  
 In the magger <sup>1</sup> of doughty Douglas,  
 and all that ever with him be.

<sup>34</sup> Rusty.

<sup>1</sup> 'Maugre,' in spite of.

The fattiste hartes in all Cheviot  
 he sayd he would kyll, and cary them away:  
 "Be my feth," sayd the doughty Douglas agayn,  
 "I will let <sup>2</sup> that hontyng if that I may."

Then the Percy out of Banborowe cam,  
 with him a myghtee meany,<sup>3</sup>  
 With fifteen hondred archares bold of blood and bone  
 they were chosen out of shyars thre.

This began on a Monday at morn,  
 in Cheviot the hillys so he;  
 The chyld may rue that ys unborn,  
 it was the more pittë.

The dryvars thorowe the woodës went,  
 for to reas the deer;  
 Bowmen to byckarte uppone the bent <sup>4</sup>  
 with their browd arrows cleare.

Then the wyld thorowe the woodës went,  
 on every sydë shear;  
 Greahondës thorowe the grevis glent,<sup>5</sup>  
 for to kyll their deer.

This begane in Cheviot the hyls abone,  
 yerly on a Monnyn-day;  
 Be that it drewe to the hour of noon,  
 a hondred fat hartës ded ther lay.

They blewe a mort <sup>6</sup> uppone the bent,  
 they semblyde on sydis shear;  
 To the quyrry then the Percy went,  
 to see the bryttlinge <sup>7</sup> of the deere.

He sayd, "It was the Douglas promys  
 this day to met me hear;  
 But I wyste he wolde faylle, verament;"  
 a great oth the Percy swear.

<sup>2</sup> Hinder.

<sup>3</sup> Company.

<sup>4</sup> Skirmished on the field.

<sup>5</sup> Ran through the groves.

<sup>6</sup> Blast blown when game is killed.

<sup>7</sup> Quartering, cutting.

At the laste a squyar of Northumberlande  
 lokyde at his hand full ny;  
 He was war a the doughtie Douglas commynge,  
 with him a myghte many.

Both with spear, bylle, and brande,  
 yt was a myghte sight to se;  
 Hardyar men, both of hart nor hande,  
 were not in Cristiantē.

They were twenty hondred spear-men good,  
 withoute any fail;  
 They were borne along be the water a Twyde,  
 yth bowndes of Tividale.

"Leave of the brytlyng of the deer," he said,  
 "and to your bows look ye tayk good hede;  
 For never si the ye were on your mothers borne  
 had ye never so mickle nede."

The doughty Douglas on a stede,  
 he rode alle his men before;  
 His armor glyttteyrde as dyd a glede;<sup>8</sup>  
 a boldar barne was never born.

"Tell me whose men ye are," he says,  
 "or whose men that ye be:  
 Who gave youe leave to hunte in this Cheviot chays,  
 in the spyt of myn and of me."

The first man that ever him an answer mayd,  
 yt was the good lord Percy:  
 "We wyll not tell the whose men we are," he says,  
 "nor whose men that we be;  
 But we wyll hounte here in this chays,  
 in spyt of thyne and of the.

"The fattiste hartes in all Cheviot  
 we have kyld, and cast to carry them away: "  
 "Be my troth," sayd the doughty Douglas agayn,  
 "therefor the tone of us shall die this day."

<sup>8</sup> Flame.

Then sayd the doughtë Douglas  
 unto the lord Percy,  
 "To kyll alle thes giltles men,  
 alas, it wear great pittë!

"But, Percy, thowe art a lord of lande,  
 I am a yerle callyd within my contrë;  
 Let all our men uppone a parti stande,  
 and do the battell of the and of me."

"Now Cristes curse on his crowne," sayd the lord Percy,  
 "whosoever thereto says nay;  
 Be my troth, doughty Douglas," he says,  
 "thow shalt never se that day.

"Nethar in Ynglonde, Skottlonde, nor France,  
 nor for no man of a woman born,  
 But, and fortune be my chance,  
 I dar met him, one man for one."

Then bespayke a squyar of Northumberlande,  
 Richard Wytharyngton was his name:  
 "It shall never be told in Sothe-Ynglonde," he says,  
 "To Kyng Herry the Fourth for shame.

"I wat youe byn great lordës twa,  
 I am a poor squyar of lande:  
 I wyll never se my captayne fyght on a fylde,  
 and stande my selffe and looke on,  
 But whylle I may my weppone welde,  
 I wyll not fayle both hart and hande."

That day, that day, that dredfull day!  
 the first fit here I fynde;<sup>9</sup>  
 And you wyll hear any more a the hountyng a the Cheviot  
 yet ys ther mor behynde.

The Yngglyshe men had their bowys ybent,  
 ther hartes were good yenoughe;  
 The first of arrows that they shote off,  
 seven skore spear-men they sloughe.

<sup>9</sup> Perhaps "finish."

Yet bides the yerle Douglas upon the bent,  
 a captayne good yenoughe,  
 And that was sene verament,  
 for he wrought hem both wo and wouche.

The Douglas partyd his host in thre,  
 like a chief chieftain of pryde;  
 With sure spears o myghtty tre,  
 they cum in on every syde:

Throughe our Yngglyshe archery  
 gave many a wounde fulle wyde;  
 Many a doughty they garde to dy,  
 which ganyde them no pryde.

The Ynglyshe men let their bowës be,  
 and pulde out brandes that were brighte;  
 It was a heavy syght to se  
 bryght swordes on basnites lyght.

Thorowe ryche male and myneyeple,<sup>10</sup>  
 many sterne they strocke down straight,  
 Many a freyke<sup>11</sup> that was fulle fre,  
 there under foot dyd lyght.

At last the Douglas and the Percy met,  
 lyk to captayns of myght and of mayne;  
 The swapte together tyll they both swat,  
 with swordes that were of fine milan.

These worthy freckys for to fyght,  
 ther-to they were fulle fayne,  
 Tylle the bloode out off their basnetes sprete  
 as ever dyd hail or rayn.

"Yield thee, Percy," sayd the Douglas,  
 "and i faith I shalle thee brynge  
 Where thowe shalte have a yerls wagis  
 of Jamy our Scottish kynge.

"Thou shalte have thy ransom fre,  
 I hight<sup>12</sup> the here this thinge;  
 For the manfullyste man yet art thou  
 that ever I conqueryd in fiede fighttynge."

<sup>10</sup> "A gauntlet covering hand and forearm."

<sup>11</sup> Man.

<sup>12</sup> Promise.

"Nay," sayd the lord Percy,  
 "I tolde it thee beforne,  
 That I wolde never yeldyde be  
 to no man of a woman born."

With that ther came an arrow hastily,  
 forthe off a myghtty wane;<sup>13</sup>  
 It hath strekene the yerle Douglas  
 in at the brest-bane.

Thorowe lyvar and lungës bothe  
 the sharpe arrowe ys gane,  
 That never after in all his lyfe-days  
 he spayke mo wordës but ane:  
 That was, "Fyghte ye, my myrry men, whyllys ye may,  
 for my lyfe-days ben gane."

The Percy leanyde on his brande,  
 and sawe the Douglas de;  
 He tooke the dead man by the hande,  
 and said, "Wo ys me for thee!

"To have savyde thy lyfe, I would have partyde with  
 my landes for years three,  
 For a better man, of hart nor of hande,  
 was not in all the north contrë."

Of all that see a Scottish knyght,  
 was callyd Sir Hewe the Monggombyrry;  
 He saw the Douglas to the death was dyght,  
 he spendyd a spear, a trusti tree.

He rode upon a corsiare  
 throughe a hondred archery:  
 He never stynttyde nor never blane,<sup>14</sup>  
 till he came to the good lord Percy.

He set upon the lorde Percy  
 a dynte that was full sore;  
 With a sure spear of a myghttë tree  
 clean thorow the body he the Percy ber,<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Meaning uncertain.

<sup>14</sup> Stopped.

<sup>15</sup> Pierced.

A the tother syde that a man might see  
 a large cloth-yard and mare:  
 Two better captayns were not in Cristiantë  
 than that day slain were there.

An archer off Northumberlande  
 saw slain was the lord Percy;  
 He bore a bende bowe in his hand,  
 was made of trusti tree;

An arrow, that a cloth-yarde was long,  
 to the harde stele halyde he;  
 A dynt that was both sad and soar  
 he set on Sir Hewe the Monggomyrry.

The dynt yt was both sad and sore,  
 that he of Monggomyrry set;  
 The swane-fethars that his arrowe bar  
 with his hart-blood they were wet.

There was never a freak one foot wolde flee,  
 but still in stour <sup>16</sup> dyd stand,  
 Hewyng on eache other, whyle they myghte dree  
 with many a balefull brande.

This battell begane in Cheviot  
 an hour before the none,  
 And when even-songe bell was rang,  
 the battell was not half done.

They took . . . on either hande  
 by the lyght of the mone;  
 Many hade no strength for to stande,  
 in Cheviot the hillys abon.

Of fifteen hundred archers of Ynglonde  
 went away but seventy and three;  
 Of twenty hundred spear-men of Scotlonde,  
 but even five and fifty.

But all were slayne Cheviot within;  
 they had no strength to stand on hy;  
 The chylde may rue that ys unborne,  
 it was the more pittë.

<sup>16</sup> Stress of battle.

There was slayne, withe the lord Percy,  
Sir John of Agerstone,  
Sir Rogar, the hinde Hartly,  
Sir Wylliam, the bold Hearone.

Sir George, the worthy Loumle,  
a knyghte of great renown,  
Sir Raff, the ryche Rugbe,  
with dyntes were beaten downe.

For Wetharryngton my harte was wo,  
that ever he slayne shulde be;  
For when both his leggis were hewyn in to,  
yet he kneeled and fought on hys knee.

There was slayne, with the doughty Douglas,  
Sir Hewe the Monggomyrry,  
Sir Davy Lwdale, that worthy was,  
his sister's son was he.

Sir Charles a Murrë in that place,  
that never a foot wolde fle;  
Sir Hewe Maxwelle, a lorde he was,  
with the Douglas dyd he die.

So on the morrowe they mayde them biers  
off birch and hasell so gray;  
Many widows, with weepyng tears,  
came to fetch ther makys<sup>17</sup> away.

Tivydale may carpe of care,  
Northumberland may mayk great moan,  
For two such captayns as slayne were there,  
on the March-parti shall never be none.

Word ys comen to Eddenburrowe,  
to Jamy the Scottische kynge,  
That doughty Douglas, lyff-tenant of the Marches,  
he lay slean Cheviot within.

His handdës dyd he weal and wryng,  
he sayd, "Alas, and woe ys me!  
Such an othar captayn Skotland within,"  
he sayd, "i-faith should never be."

<sup>17</sup> Mates.

Worde ys commyn to lovely Londone,  
 till the fourth Harry our kynge.  
 That lord Percy, leyff-tenante of the Marchis,  
 he lay slayne Cheviot within.

"God have mercy on his soule," sayde Kyng Harry,  
 "good lord, yf thy will it be!  
 I have a hondred captayns in Ynglonde," he sayd,  
 "as good as ever was he:  
 But Percy, and I brook my lyfe,  
 thy deth well quyte shall be."

As our noble kynge mayd his avowe,  
 lyke a noble prince of renown,  
 For the deth of the lord Percy  
 he dyd the battell of Hombyll-down;

Where syx and thirty Skottishe knyghtes  
 on a day were beaten down:  
 Glendale glytteryde on their armor bryght,  
 over castille, towar, and town.

This was the hontynge of the Cheviot,  
 that tear<sup>18</sup> begane this spurn;  
 Old men that knowen the grownde well enoughe  
 call it the battell of Otterburn.

At Otterburn begane this spurne  
 upon a Monnynday;  
 There was the doughty Douglas sleane,  
 the Percy never went away.

There was never a tyme on the Marche-partës  
 sen the Douglas and the Percy met,  
 But yt ys meruele and the rede blude ronne not,  
 as the rain does in the stret.

Jesus Christ our balës<sup>19</sup> bete,  
 and to the bliss us bring!  
 Thus was the hunting of the Cheviot;  
 God send us alle good ending!

<sup>18</sup> That there(?).

<sup>19</sup> Evils.

## SIR PATRICK SPENS

THE king sits in Dumferling toune,  
Drinking the blude-reid wine:  
"O whar will I get guid sailor,  
To sail this ship of mine?"

Up and spak an eldern knight,  
Sat at the kings right kne:  
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,  
That sails upon the sea."

The king has written a braid letter,<sup>1</sup>  
And sign'd it wi' his hand,  
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,  
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick read,  
A loud laugh laughed he;  
The next line that Sir Patrick read,  
The tear blinded his ee.

"O wha is this has done this deed,  
This ill deed done to me,  
To send me out this time o' the year,  
To sail upon the sea!

"Make haste, make haste, my mirry men all,  
Our guide ship sails the morne":  
"O say na sae, my master dear,  
For I fear a deadlie storme.

"Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone,<sup>2</sup>  
Wi' the auld moone in hir arme,  
And I fear, I fear, my dear master,  
That we will come to harme."

O our Scots nobles were right laith  
To weet their cork-heeled shoone;  
But lang owre a' the play wer play'd,  
Their hats they swam aboone.

<sup>1</sup> "A braid letter, open or patent, in opposition to close rolls." — Percy.

<sup>2</sup> Note that it is the sight of the new moon *late* in the evening which makes a bad omen.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,  
 W' their fans into their hand,  
 Or e'er they see Sir Patrick Spens  
 Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,  
 Wi' their gold kems<sup>3</sup> in their hair,  
 Waiting for their ain dear lords,  
 For they'll se thame na mair.

Half owre, half owre to Aberdour,  
 It's fiftie fadom deep,  
 And their lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,  
 Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

### THE BONNY EARL OF MURRAY<sup>1</sup>

**Y**E Highlands, and ye Lawlands,  
 Oh where have you been?  
 They have slain the Earl of Murray,  
 And they layd him on the green.

"Now wae be to thee, Huntly!  
 And wherefore did you sae?  
 I bade you bring him wi' you,  
 But forbade you him to slay."

He was a braw gallant,  
 And he rid at the ring;<sup>2</sup>  
 And the bonny Earl of Murray,  
 Oh he might have been a king!

He was a braw gallant,  
 And he play'd at the ba';  
 And the bonny Earl of Murray  
 Was the flower among them a'.

<sup>3</sup> Combs.

<sup>1</sup> James Stewart, Earl of Murray, was killed by the Earl of Huntley's followers, February 1592. The second stanza is spoken, of course, by the King.

<sup>2</sup> Piercing with the lance a suspended ring, as one rode at full speed, was a favorite sport of that day.

He was a brow gallant,  
 And he play'd at the glove;<sup>3</sup>  
 And the bonny Earl of Murray,  
 Oh he was the Queen's love!

Oh lang will his lady  
 Look o'er the Castle Down,  
 E'er she see the Earl of Murray  
 Come sounding thro the town!

## MARY HAMILTON

WORD'S gane to the kitchen,  
 And word's gane to the ba',  
 That Mary Hamilton has born a bairn  
 To the highest Stewart of a'.

She's tyed it in her apron  
 And she's thrown it in the sea;  
 Says, "Sink ye, swim ye, bonny wee babe.  
 You'll ne'er get mair o' me."

Down then cam the auld Queen,  
 Gould<sup>1</sup> tassels tying her hair:  
 "O Marie, where's the bonny wee babe  
 That I heard greet<sup>2</sup> sae sair?"

"There was never a babe intill my room,  
 As little designs to be;  
 It was but a touch o' my sair side,  
 Came o'er my fair bodie."

"O Marie, put on your robes o' black,  
 Or else your robes o' brown,  
 For ye maun gang wi' me the night,  
 To see fair Edinbro town."

<sup>3</sup> Probably this reference is to the glove worn by knights as a lady's favor.

<sup>1</sup> Gold.

<sup>2</sup> Weep.

"I winna put on my robes o' black,  
 Nor yet my robes o' brown;  
 But I'll put on my robes o' white,  
 To shine through Edinbro town."

When she gaed up the Cannogate,  
 She laugh'd loud laughters three;  
 But when she cam down the Cannogate  
 The tear blinded her ee.

When she gaed up the Parliament stair,  
 The heel cam aff her shée;<sup>3</sup>  
 And lang or she cam down again  
 She was condemn'd to dee.

When she cam down the Cannogate,  
 The Cannogate sae free,  
 Many a ladie look'd o'er her window,  
 Weeping for this ladie.

"Make never meen<sup>4</sup> for me," she says,  
 "Make never meen for me;  
 Seek never grace frae a graceless face,  
 For that ye'll never see.

"Bring me a bottle of wine," she says,  
 "The best that e'er ye hae,  
 That I may drink to my weill-wishers,  
 And they may drink to me.

"And here's to the jolly sailor lad  
 That sails upon the faem;  
 But let not my father nor mother get wit  
 But that I shall come again.

"And here's to the jolly sailor lad  
 That sails upon the sea;  
 But let not my father nor mother get wit  
 O' the death that I maun dee.

"Oh little did my mother think,  
 The day she cradled me,  
 What lands I was to travel through,  
 What death I was to dee.

<sup>3</sup> Shoe.

<sup>4</sup> Moan.

"Oh little did my father think,  
 The day he held up <sup>5</sup> me,  
 What lands I was to travel through,  
 What death I was to dee.

"Last night I wash'd the Queen's feet,  
 And gently laid her down;  
 And a' the thanks I've gotten the nicht  
 To be hangd in Edinbro town!

"Last nicht there was four Maries,  
 The nicht there'll be but three;  
 There was Marie Seton, and Marie Beton,  
 And Marie Carmichael, and me."

# BONNIE GEORGE CAMPBELL

HIGH upon Highlands,  
 and low upon Tay,  
 Bonnie George Campbell  
 rade out on a day.

Saddled and bridled  
 and gallant rade he;  
 Hame cam his guid horse,  
 but never cam he.

Out cam his auld mither  
 greeting <sup>1</sup> fu' sair,  
 And out cam his bonnie bride  
 riving her hair.

Saddled and bridled  
 and booted rade he;  
 Toom <sup>2</sup> hame cam the saddle,  
 but never came he.

<sup>5</sup> Held up, lifted up, recognized as his lawful child — a world-wide and ancient ceremony.

<sup>1</sup> Weeping.

<sup>2</sup> Empty.

"My meadow lies green,  
and my corn is unshorn,  
My barn is to build,  
and my babe is unborn."

Saddled and bridled  
and bootied rade he;  
Toom hame cam the saddle,  
but never cam he.

### BESSIE BELL AND MARY GRAY <sup>1</sup>



BESSIE BELL and Mary Gray,  
They war twa bonnie lasses!  
They biggit <sup>2</sup> a bower on yon burn-brae,<sup>3</sup>  
And theekit <sup>4</sup> it o'er wi' rashes.

They theekit it oer wi' rashes green,  
They theekit it oer wi' heather:  
But the pest cam frae the burrows-town,  
And slew them baith thegither.

They thought to lie in Methven kirk-yard  
Amang their noble kin;  
But they maun lye in Stronach haugh,  
To biek forenent the sin.<sup>5</sup>

And Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,  
They war twa bonnie lasses;  
They biggit a bower on yon burn-brae,  
And theekit it oer wi' rashes.

<sup>1</sup> Founded on an actual event of the plague, near Perth, in 1645. See the interesting account in Professor Child's 'Ballads,' Part vii, p. 75 f.

<sup>2</sup> Built.

<sup>3</sup> A hill sloping down to a brook.

<sup>4</sup> Thatched.

<sup>5</sup> To bake in the rays of the sun.

THE THREE RAVENS<sup>1</sup>

**T**HERE were three ravens sat on a tree,  
     Downe a downe, hay down, hay downe,  
 There were three ravens sat on a tree,  
     With a downe,  
 There were three ravens sat on a tree,  
 They were as blacke as they might be.  
     With a downe derrie, derrie, derrie, downe, downe.

The one of them said to his mate,  
 "Where shall we our breakfast take?"

"Downe in yonder greene field  
 There lies a knight slain under his shield.

"His hounds they lie down at his feete,  
 So well they can their master keepe."<sup>2</sup>

"His haukes they flie so eagerly,  
 There's no fowle dare him come nie."

Downe there comes a fallow doe,  
 As great with young as she might goe.

She lift up his bloody head,  
 And kist his wounds that were so red.

She got him up upon her backe,  
 And carried him to earthen lake.<sup>3</sup>

She buried him before the prime,  
 She was dead herselfe ere even-song time.


God send every gentleman  
 Such haukes, such hounds, and such a leman.

<sup>1</sup> The counterpart, or perhaps parody, of this ballad, called 'The Twa Corbies,' is better known than the exquisite original.

<sup>2</sup> Guard.

<sup>3</sup> Shroud of earth, burial.

## LORD RANDAL

 WHERE hae ye been, Lord Randal, my son?  
 O where hae ye been, my handsome young man? "  
 "I hae been to the wild wood; mother, make my bed soon,  
 For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."


"Where gat ye your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?  
 Where gat ye your dinner, my handsome young man? "  
 "I din'd wi' my true-love; mother, make my bed soon,  
 For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"What gat ye to your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?  
 What gat ye to your dinner, my handsome young man? "  
 "I gat eels boiled in broo; <sup>1</sup> mother, make my bed soon,  
 For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"What became o' your bloodhounds, Lord Randal, my son?  
 What became o' your bloodhounds, my handsome young man? "  
 "O they swell'd and they died; mother, make my bed soon,  
 For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"O I fear you are poison'd, Lord Randal, my son!  
 O I fear you are poison'd, my handsome young man! "  
 "O yes! I'm poison'd; mother, make my bed soon,  
 For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wald lie down."

## EDWARD

 HY dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,  
 Edward, Edward,  
 Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,  
 And why sae sad gang yee O? "  
 "O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,  
 Mither, mither,  
 O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,  
 And I had nae mair bot hee O."

<sup>1</sup> Broth.

"Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,  
Edward, Edward,

Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,  
My deir son I tell thee O."

"O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,  
Mither, mither,

O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,  
That erst was sae fair and frie O."

"Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,  
Edward, Edward,

Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,  
Sum other dule ye drie O."<sup>1</sup>

"O I hae killed my fadir deir,  
Mither, mither,

O I hae killed my fadir deir,  
Alas, and wae is mee O!"

"And whatten penance wul ye drie, for that,  
Edward, Edward,

And whatten penance wul ye drie, for that?  
My deir son, now tell me O."

"I'll set my feit in yonder boat,  
Mither, mither,

I'll set my feit in yonder boat,  
And I'll fare over the sea O."

"And what wul ye doe wi' your towers and your ha',  
Edward, Edward,

And what wul ye doe wi' your towers and your ha',  
That were sae fair to see O?"

"I'll let them stand till they down fa',  
Mither, mither,

I'll let them stand till they down fa',  
For here nevir mair maun I bee O."

"And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,  
Edward, Edward,

And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,  
When ye gang over the sea O?"

<sup>1</sup> You suffer some other sorrow.



"I'll not be a rank robber's wife,  
But I'll rather die by your wee penknife!"

He's killed this may, and he's laid her by,  
For to bear the red rose company.

He's taken the youngest ane by the hand,  
And he's turned her round and made her stand.

Says, "Will ye be a rank robber's wife,  
Or will ye die by my wee penknife?"

"I'll not be a rank robber's wife,  
Nor will I die by your wee penknife.

"For I hae a brother in this wood,  
And gin ye kill me, it's he'll kill thee."

"What's thy brother's name? Come tell to me."  
"My brother's name is Baby Lon."

"O sister, sister, what have I done!  
O have I done this ill to thee!

"O since I've done this evil deed,  
Good sall never be seen o' me."

He's taken out his wee penknife,  
And he's twyned<sup>1</sup> himsel o' his own sweet life.'

### CHILDE MAURICE<sup>1</sup>

**C**HILDE MAURICE hunted i' the silver wood,  
He hunted it round about,  
And noebodye that he found therein,  
Nor none there was without.

<sup>1</sup> Parted, deprived.

<sup>1</sup> It is worth while to quote Gray's praise of this ballad: — "I have got the old Scotch ballad on which 'Douglas' [the well-known tragedy by Home] was founded. It is divine. . . . Aristotle's best rules are observed in a manner which shows the author never had heard of Aristotle." — Letter to Mason, in 'Works,' ed. Gosse, ii, 316.

He says, "Come hither, thou little foot-page,  
That runneth lowlye by my knee,  
For thou shalt goe to John Steward's wife  
And pray her speake with me.

" . . . . .  
I, and greete thou doe that ladye well,  
Ever soe well fro me.

"And, as it falls, as many times  
As knots beene knit on a kell,<sup>2</sup>  
Or marchant men gone to leeve London  
Either to buy ware or sell.

"And, as it falles, as many times  
As any hart can thinke,  
Or schoolemasters are in any schoole-house  
Writing with pen and inke:  
For if I might, as well as she may,  
This night I would with her speake.

"And heere I send her a mantle of greene,  
As greene as any grasse,  
And bid her come to the silver wood,  
To hunt with Childe Maurice.

"And there I send her a ring of gold,  
A ring of precious stone,  
And bid her come to the silver wood,  
Let<sup>3</sup> for no kind of man."

One while this little boy he yode,<sup>4</sup>  
Another while he ran,  
Until he came to John Steward's hall,  
I-wis<sup>5</sup> he never blan.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> That is, the page is to greet the lady as many times as there are knots in nets for the hair (*kell*), or merchants going to dear (*leeve*, *lief*) London, or thoughts of the heart, or schoolmasters in all school-houses. These multiplied and comparative greetings are common in folk-lore, particularly in German popular lyric.

<sup>3</sup> *Let* (*desist*) is an infinitive depending on *bid*.

<sup>4</sup> Went, walked.

<sup>5</sup> Certainly.

<sup>6</sup> Stopped.

And of nurture the child had good,  
 He ran up hall and bower free,  
 And when he came to this ladye faire,  
 Sayes, "God you save and see!"<sup>7</sup>

"I am come from Childe Maurice,  
 A message unto thee;  
 And Childe Maurice, he greetes you well,  
 And ever soe well from me.

"And as it falls, as oftentimes  
 As knots beene knit on a kell,  
 Or marchant men gone to leeve London  
 Either for to buy ware or sell.

"And as oftentimes he greetes you well  
 As any hart can thinke,  
 Or schoolemasters are in any schoole,  
 Wryting with pen and inke.

"And heere he sends a mantle of greene,<sup>8</sup>  
 As greene as any grasse,  
 And he bids you come to the silver wood,  
 To hunt with Childe Maurice.

"And heere he sends you a ring of gold,  
 A ring of the precious stone;  
 He prayes you to come to the silver wood,  
 Let for no kind of man."

"Now peace, now peace, thou little foot-page,  
 For Christes sake, I pray thee!  
 For if my lord heare one of these words,  
 Thou must be hanged hye!"

John Steward stood under the castle wall,  
 And he wrote the words everye one,  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . .

<sup>7</sup> Protect.

<sup>8</sup> These, of course, are tokens of the Childe's identity.

And he called upon his hors-keeper,  
 "Make ready you my steede!"  
 I, and soe he did to his chamberlaine,  
 "Make ready thou my weede!"<sup>9</sup>

And he cast a lease<sup>10</sup> upon his backe,  
 And he rode to the silver wood,  
 And there he sought all about,  
 About the silver wood.

And there he found him Childe Maurice  
 Sitting upon a blocke,  
 With a silver combe in his hand,  
 Kembing his yellow lockes. . . .

But then stood up him Childe Maurice,  
 And sayd these words trulye:  
 "I doe not know your ladye," he said,  
 "If that I doe her see."

He sayes, "How now, how now, Childe Maurice?  
 Alacke, how may this be?  
 For thou hast sent her love-tokens,  
 More now then two or three;

"For thou hast sent her a mantle of greene,  
 As greene as any grasse,  
 And bade her come to the silver woode  
 To hunt with Childe Maurice.

"And thou hast sent her a ring of gold,  
 A ring of precyous stone,  
 And bade her come to the silver wood,  
 Let for no kind of man.

"And by my faith, now, Childe Maurice,  
 The tone<sup>11</sup> of us shall dye!"  
 "Now be my troth," sayd Childe Maurice,  
 "And that shall not be I."

<sup>9</sup> Clothes.

<sup>10</sup> Leash.

<sup>11</sup> That one = the one. *That* is the old neuter form of the definite article. Cf. the *tother* for *that other*.

But he pulled forth a bright browne <sup>12</sup> sword,  
 And dryed it on the grasse,  
 And soe fast he smote at John Steward,  
 I-wisse he never did rest.

Then he <sup>13</sup> pulled forth his bright browne sword,  
 And dryed it on his sleeve,  
 And the first good stroke John Stewart stroke,  
 Childe Maurice head he did cleeve.

And he pricked it on his sword's poynt,  
 Went singing there beside,  
 And he rode till he came to that ladye faire,  
 Whereas this ladye lyed.<sup>14</sup>

And sayes, 'Dost thou know Childe Maurice head,  
 If that thou dost it see?  
 And lap it soft, and kisse it oft,  
 For thou lovedst him better than me."

But when she looked on Childe Maurice head,  
 She never spake words but three:  
 "I never beare no childe but one,  
 And you have slaine him trulye."

Sayes,<sup>15</sup> "Wicked be my merry-men all,  
 I gave meate, drinke, and clothe!  
 But could they not have holden me  
 When I was in all that wrath!

"For I have slaine one of the curteousest knights  
 That ever bestrode a steed,  
 So <sup>16</sup> have I done one of the fairest ladyes  
 That ever ware woman's weede! "

<sup>12</sup> *Brown*, used in this way, seems to mean burnished, or glistening, and is found in Anglo-Saxon.

<sup>13</sup> *He*, John Steward.

<sup>14</sup> Lived.

<sup>15</sup> John Steward.

<sup>16</sup> Compare the similar swiftness of tragic development in 'Babylon.'

## THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

THERE lived a wife at Usher's Well,  
 And a wealthy wife was she;  
 She had three stout and stalwart sons,  
 And sent them o'er the sea.

They hadna been a week from her,  
 A week but barely ane,  
 When word came to the carlin <sup>1</sup> wife  
 That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,  
 A week but barely three,  
 When word came to the carlin wife  
 That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,  
 Nor fashes <sup>2</sup> in the flood,  
 Till my three sons come hame to me,  
 In earthly flesh and blood."

It fell about the Martinmass,<sup>3</sup>  
 When nights are lang and mirk,  
 The carlin wife's three sons came hame,  
 And their hats were o' the birk.<sup>4</sup>

It neither grew in syke <sup>5</sup> nor ditch,  
 Nor yet in ony sheugh,<sup>6</sup>  
 But at the gates o' Paradise,  
 That birk grew fair eneugh.

. . . . .

"Blow up the fire, my maidens!  
 Bring water from the well!  
 For a' my house shall feast this night,  
 Since my three sons are well."

<sup>1</sup> Old woman.

<sup>2</sup> Lockhart's clever emendation for the *fishes* of the Ms. *Fashes* = disturbances, storms.

<sup>3</sup> November 11th. Another version gives the time as "the hallow days of Yule."

<sup>4</sup> Birch.

<sup>5</sup> Marsh.

<sup>6</sup> Furrow, ditch.

And she has made to them a bed,  
 She's made it large and wide,  
 And she's ta'en her mantle her about,  
 Sat down at the bed-side. . . .

Up then crew the red, red cock,<sup>7</sup>  
 And up and crew the gray;  
 The eldest to the youngest said,  
 "'Tis time we were away."

The cock he hadna craw'd but once,  
 And clapp'd his wing at a',  
 When the youngest to the eldest said,  
 "Brother, we must awa'.

"The cock doth crawl, the day doth daw,  
 The channerin <sup>8</sup> worm doth chide;  
 Gin we be mist out o' our place,  
 A sair pain we maun bide.

"Fare ye weel, my mother dear!  
 Fareweel to barn and byre!  
 And fare ye weel, the bonny lass  
 That kindles my mother's fire!"

## SWEET WILLIAM'S GHOST

WHAN bells war rung, and mass was sung,  
 A wat <sup>1</sup> a' man to bed were gone,  
 Clark Sanders came to Margret's window,  
 With mony a sad sigh and groan.

"Are ye sleeping, Margret," he says,  
 "Or are ye waking, presentlie?  
 Give me my faith and trowth again,  
 A wat, true-love, I gied to thee."

<sup>7</sup> In folk-lore, the break of day is announced to demons and ghosts by three cocks, usually a white, a red, and a black; but the colors, and even the numbers, vary. At the third crow, the ghosts must vanish. This applies to guilty and innocent alike; of course, the sons are "spirits of health."

<sup>8</sup> Fretting.

<sup>1</sup> "I wot," "I know," = truly, in sooth.

"Your faith and trouth ye's never get,  
Nor our true love shall never twin,<sup>2</sup>  
Till ye come with me in my bower,  
And kiss me both cheek and chin."

"My mouth it is full cold, Margret,  
It has the smell now of the ground;  
And if I kiss thy comely mouth,  
Thy life-days will not be long.

"Cocks are crowing a merry mid-larf,<sup>3</sup>  
I wat the wild fule boded day;  
Give me my faith and trouth again,  
And let me fare me on my way."

"Thy faith and trouth thou shall na get,  
Nor our true love shall never twin,  
Till ye tell me what comes of women  
A wat that dy's in strong traveling."<sup>4</sup>

"Their beds are made in the heavens high,  
Down at the foot of our good Lord's knee,  
Well set about wi' gilly-flowers,  
A wat sweet company for to see.

"O cocks are crowing a merry mid-larf,  
A wat the wild fule boded day;  
The salms of Heaven will be sung,  
And ere now I'll be missed away."

Up she has taen a bright long wand,  
And she has straked her trouth thereon;<sup>5</sup>  
She has given it him out at the shot-window,  
Wi mony a sad sigh and heavy groan.

"I thank you, Margret, I thank you, Margret,  
And I thank you heartilie;  
Gin ever the dead come for the quick,  
Be sure, Margret, I'll come again for thee."

<sup>2</sup> Part, separate. She does not yet know he is dead.

<sup>3</sup> Probably the distorted name of a town; *a* = in. "Cocks are crowing in merry — and the wild-fowl announce the dawn."

<sup>4</sup> That die in childbirth.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret thus gives him back his troth-pledge by "stroking" it upon the wand, much as savages and peasants believe they can rid themselves of a disease by rubbing the affected part with a stick or pebble and flinging the latter into the road.

It's hose and shoon an ground <sup>6</sup> alane  
 She clame the wall and followed him,  
 Until she came to a green forest,  
 On this she lost the sight of him.

"Is there any room at your head, Sanders?  
 Is there any room at your feet?  
 Or any room at your twa sides?  
 Where fain, fain woud I sleep."

"There is nae room at my head, Margret,  
 There is nae room at my feet;  
 There is room at my twa sides,  
 For ladys for to sleep.

"Cold meal <sup>7</sup> is my covering owre,  
 But an <sup>8</sup> my winding sheet:  
 My bed it is full low, I say,  
 Among hungry worms I sleep.

"Cold meal is my covering owre,  
 But an my winding sheet:  
 The dew it falls nae sooner down  
 Than ay it is full weet."

## BINNORIE

**T**HERE were twa sisters sat in a bower;  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 A knight came there, a noble wooer,  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He courted the eldest wi' glove and ring,  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 But he lo'ed the youngest aboon a' thing —  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The eldest she was vexèd sair,  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 And sair envied her sister fair —  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

<sup>6</sup> Gown.<sup>7</sup> Mold, earth.<sup>8</sup> But and = also.

Upon a morning fair and clear  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 She cried upon her sister dear,  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie: —

"O sister, sister, tak' my hand,"  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 "And let's go down to the river-strand,  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie."

She's ta'en her by the lily hand,  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 And down they went to the river-strand,  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The youngest stood upon a stane,  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 The eldest cam' and pushed her in,  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O sister, sister, reach your hand!"  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 "And ye sall be heir o' half my land" —  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O sister, reach me but your glove!"  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 "And sweet William sall be your love" —  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie."

Sometimes she sank, sometimes she swam,  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 Till she cam' to the mouth o' yon mill-dam,  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Out then cam' the miller's son  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 And saw the fair maid soummin' in,  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

"O father, father, draw your dam!"  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 "There's either a mermaid or a swan" —  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The miller quickly drew the dam,  
    (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
And here he found a drowned woman,  
    By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Round about her middle sma'  
    (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
There went a gowden girdle sma' —  
    By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

All amang her yellow hair  
    (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
A string o' pearls was twisted rare —  
    By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

On her fingers, lily-white,  
    (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
The jewel-rings were shining bright —  
    By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And by there cam' a harper fine,  
    (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
Harpèd to nobles when they dine —  
    By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And when he looked that lady on,  
    (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
He sighed and made a heavy moan,  
    By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He's ta'en three locks o' her yellow hair,  
    (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
And wi' them strung his harp sae rare,  
    By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He went into her father's hall,  
    (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
And played his harp before them all,  
    By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And sune the harp sang loud and clear,  
    (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
"Fareweel, my father and mither dear!" —  
    By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And neist when the harp began to sing, -  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 'Twas "Fareweel, sweetheart!" said the string —  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And then, as plain as plain could be,  
 (Binnorie, O Binnorie!)  
 "There sits my sister who drownèd me!" —  
 By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

### THE NUT-BROWN MAID

**B**E it ryght or wrong, these men among  
 On women do complayne:  
 Affyrmynge this, how that it is  
 A labour spent in vayne  
 To love them wele; for never a dele  
 They love a man agayne:  
 For late a man do what he can,  
 Theyr favour to attayne,  
 Yet yf a newe do them persue,  
 Theyr first true lover than  
 Laboureth for nought; for from her thought  
 He is a banyshed man.

I say nat nay, but that all day  
 It is bothe writ and sayd  
 That woman's faith is, as who sayth,  
 All utterly decayd;  
 But neverthesse ryght good wytnesse  
 In this case might be layd,  
 That they love true and continúe:  
 Recorde the Not-browne Mayd —  
 Which, when her love came, her to prove,  
 To her to make his mone,  
 Wold nat depart; for in her hart  
 She loved but hym alone.

Than betwaine us late us dyscus  
 What was all the manere  
 Betwayne them two: we wyll also  
 Tell all the payne and fere

That she is in. Now I begyn  
 So that ye me answére;  
 Wherefore all ye that present be  
 I pray you gyve an ere: —  
 I am the knight: I come by nyght,  
 As secret as I can;  
 Sayinge, "Alas! thus standeth the case:  
 I am a banyshed man."

## SHE

And I your wyll for to fulfyll  
 In 'this wyll nat refuse;  
 Trustying to shewe, in wordès fewe,  
 That men have an yll use  
 (To theyr own shame) women to blame,  
 And causelesse them accuse:  
 Therfore to you I answeare nowe,  
 All women to excuse —  
 Myne owne hart dere, with what you chere  
 I pray you, tell anone;  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

## HE

It standeth so — a dede is do  
 Whereof grete harme shall growe:  
 My destiny is for to dy  
 A shameful deth, I trowe;  
 Or elles to fle: the one must be.  
 None other way I knowe,  
 But to withdrawe as an outlawe,  
 And take me to my bowe.  
 Wherefore, adue, my owne hart true!  
 None other rede I can;  
 For I must to the grene wode go  
 Alone, a banyshed man.

## SHE

O Lord, what is thys worldys blysse,  
 That changeth as the mone!  
 My somers day in lusty May  
 Is derked before the none.

I here you say farewell: nay, nay,  
 We départ nat so sone.  
 Why say ye so? wheder wyll ye go?  
 Alas! what have ye done?  
 All my welfáre to sorrowe and care,  
 Sholde chaunge, yf ye were gone;  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

## HE

I can beleve it shall you greve,  
 And somewhat you dystrayne:  
 But aftyward, your paynes harde  
 Within a day or twayne  
 Shall some aslake; and ye shall take  
 Comfort to you agayne.  
 Why sholde ye ought? for to make thought,  
 Your labour were in vayne.  
 And thus I do; and pray you to  
 As hartely as I can:  
 For I must to the grene wode go  
 Alone, a banyshed man.

## SHE

Now, syth that ye have shewed to me  
 The secret of your mynde,  
 I shall be playne to you agayne,  
 Lyke as ye shall me fynde.  
 Syth it is so, that ye wyll go,  
 I wolle not leve behynde:  
 Shall never be sayd, the Not-browne Mayd  
 Was to her love unkeynde.  
 Make you redy, for so am I,  
 Allthough it were anone;  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

## HE

Yet I you rede to take good hede  
 What men wyll thynke and say:  
 Of yonge and olde it shall be tolde,  
 That ye be gone away,

Your wanton wyll for to fulfyll,  
In grene wode you to play;  
And that ye myght from your delyght  
No lenger make delay.  
Rather than ye sholde thus for me  
Be called an yll womán,  
Yet wolde I to the grene wode go  
Alone, a banyshed man.

## SHE

Though it be songe of old and yonge,  
That I sholde be to blame,  
Theys be the charge, that speke so large  
In hurtynge of my name:  
For I wyll prove that faythfulle love  
It is devoyd of shame;  
In your dystresse and hevynesse,  
To part with you, the same:  
And sure all tho, that do not so,  
True lovers are they none;  
For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
I love but you alone.

## HE

I counceyle you, remember howe  
It is no maydens lawe,  
Nothyng to dout, but to renne out  
To wode with an outláwe:  
For ye must there in your hand bere  
A bowe, redy to drawe;  
And as a thefe, thus must you lyve,  
Ever in drede and awe:  
Wherby to you grete harme myght growe;  
Yet had I lever than  
That I had to the grene wode go  
Alone, a banyshed man.

## SHE

I thinke nat nay, but as ye say,  
It is no maidens lore:  
But love may make me for your sake,  
As I have sayd before,

To come on fote, to hunt, and shote,  
 To gete us mete in store;  
 For so that I your company  
 May have, I aske no more:  
 From which to part, it maketh my hart  
 As colde as ony stone;  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

## HE

For an outlawe this is the lawe,  
 That men hym take and bynde;  
 Without pyté, hangèd to be,  
 And waver with the wynde.  
 If I nede, (as God forbede!)  
 What rescous coude ye fynde?  
 Forsoth, I trowe, ye and your bowe  
 For fere wolde drawe behynde:  
 And no mervayle; for lytell avayle  
 Were in your counceyle than:  
 Wherefore I wyll to the grene wode go  
 Alone, a banyshed man.

## SHE

Right wele know ye, that woman be  
 But feble for to fyght;  
 No womenhede it is indede  
 To be bolde as a knyght:  
 Yet in such fere yf that ye were  
 With enemyes day or nyght,  
 I wolde withstande, with bowe in hande,  
 To greve them as I myght,  
 And you to save; as women have  
 From deth, men many one:  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

## HE

Yet take good hede; for ever I drede  
 That ye coude nat sustayne  
 The thornie wayes, the deep vallées,  
 The snowe, the frost, the rayne,

The colde, the hete: for dry or wete,  
 We must lodge on the playne;  
 And, us above, none other rofe  
 But a brake bush, or twayne:  
 Which some sholde greve you, I beleve;  
 And ye wolde gladly than  
 That I had to the grene wode go  
 Alone, a banyshed man.

## SHE

Syth I have here bene partynére  
 With you of joy and blysse,  
 I must also part of your wo  
 Endure, as reson is;  
 Yet am I sure of one plesúre  
 And shortely, it is this:  
 That where ye be, me semeth, pardé,  
 I could not fare amysse.  
 Without more speche, I you beseche  
 That we were sone agone;  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

## HE

If ye go thyder, ye must consyder,  
 What ye have lust to dyne,  
 There shall no mete be for you gete,  
 Nor drinke, bere, ale, ne wyne.  
 No schetès clene, to lye betwene,  
 Made of threde and twyne;  
 None other house but leves and bowes,  
 To cover your hed and myne.  
 O myne harte swete, this evyll dyète  
 Sholde make you pale and wan;  
 Wherefore I wyll to the grene wode go  
 Alone, a banyshed man.

## SHE

Amonge the wild dere, such an archére  
 As men say that ye be  
 Ne may nat fayle of good vitayle,  
 Where is so grete plenté;

And water clere of the ryvére  
 Shall be full swete to me:  
 With which in hele I shall ryght wele  
 Endure, as ye shall see;  
 And, or we go, a bedde or two  
 I can provyde anone:  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

HE

Lo! yet, before, ye must do more,  
 Yf ye wyll go with me:  
 As cut your here up by your ere,  
 Your kyrtel by the kne;  
 With bowe in hande, for to withstande  
 Your enemyes, yf nede be:  
 And this same nyght, before daylight,  
 To wodewarde wyll I fle.  
 Yf that ye wyll all this fulfill,  
 Do it shortely as ye can;  
 Els wyll I to the grene wode go  
 Alone, a banyshed man.

SHE

I shall as nowe do more for you  
 Than longeth to womanhede;  
 To shote my here, a bowe to bere,  
 To shote in tyme of nede.  
 O my swete mother, before all other  
 For you I have most drede:  
 But nowe adue! I must ensue  
 Where fortune doth me lede.  
 All this make ye: now let us fle;  
 The day cometh fast upon:  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

HE

Nay, nay, nat so; ye shall nat go,  
 And I shall tell ye why:  
 Your appetyght is to be lyght  
 Of love, I wele espy;

For lyke as ye have sayd to me,  
 In lyke wyse hardely  
 Ye wolde answére whosoever it were,  
 In way of company.  
 It is sayd of olde, Sone hot, sone colde;  
 And so is a womán.  
 Wherfore I to the wode wyll go  
 Alone, a banyshed man.

## SHE

Yf ye take hede, it is no nede  
 Such wordes to say by me:  
 For oft ye prayed, and longe assayed,  
 Or I you loved, pardé;  
 And though that I of auncestry  
 A barons daughter be,  
 Yet have you proved howe I you loved,  
 A squyer of lowe degre:  
 And ever shall, whatso befall  
 To dy therfore anone;  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

## HE

A barons chylde to be begylde!  
 It were a cursèd dede;  
 To be feláwe with an outlawe!  
 Almighty God forbede!  
 Yet better were the pore squyére  
 Alone to forest yede,  
 Than ye sholde say another day,  
 That, by my cursèd dede,  
 Ye were betrayed; wherefore, good mayd,  
 The best rede that I can,  
 Is, that I to the grene wode go  
 Alone, a banyshed man.

## SHE

Whatever befall, I never shall  
 Of this thyng you upbrayd;  
 But yf ye go, and leve me so,  
 Then have ye me betrayd.

Remember you wele, howe that ye dele:  
 For yf ye, as ye sayd,  
 Be so unkynde, to leve behynde  
 Your love, the Not-browne Mayd,  
 Trust me truly, that I shall dy  
 Sone after ye be gone;  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

HE

Yf that ye went, ye sholde repent:  
 For in the forest nowe  
 I have purvayed me of a mayd,  
 Whom I love more than you;  
 Another fayrere than ever ye were,  
 I dare it wele avowe:  
 And of ye bothe eche sholde be wrothe  
 With other, as I trowe.  
 It were myne ese, to lyve in pese;  
 So wyll I yf I can:  
 Wherefore I to the wode wyll go  
 Alone, a banyshed man.

SHE

Though in the wode I undyrstode  
 Ye had a paramour,  
 All this may nought remove my thought,  
 But that I will be your:  
 And she shall fynde me soft, and kynde,  
 And courteys every hour;  
 Glad to fulfyll all that she wyll  
 Commaunde me to my power:  
 For had ye, lo, an hundred mo,  
 Of them I wolde be one;  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

HE

Myne owne dere love, I se the prove  
 That ye be kynde and true;  
 Of mayd and wyfe, in all my lyfe,  
 The best that ever I knewe.

Be mery and glad, be no more sad,  
 The case is chaungèd newe;  
 For it were ruthe, that for your truthe  
 Ye sholde have cause to rewe.  
 Be nat dismayed: whatsoever I sayd  
 To you whan I began,  
 I wyll not to the grene wode go —  
 I am no banyshed man.

## SHE

These tydings be more gladd to me  
 Than to be made a quene,  
 Yf I were sure they sholde endure;  
 But it is often sene,  
 Whan men wyll breke promyse, they speke  
 The wordes on the splene.  
 Ye shape some wyle me to begyle,  
 And stele from me, I wene:  
 Than were the case worse than it was,  
 And I more wo-begone;  
 For in my mynde, of all mankynde  
 I love but you alone.

## HE

Ye shall nat nede further to drede;  
 I will nat dysparáge  
 You, (God forfend!) syth ye descend  
 Of so grete a lynáge.  
 Nowe undyrstande: to Westmarlande,  
 Which is myne herytage,  
 I wyll you brynge, and with a rynge  
 By way of maryage  
 I wyll you take, and lady make,  
 As shortely as I can;  
 Thus have you won an erlys son  
 And not a banyshed man.

## AUTHOR

Here may ye se that women be  
 In love, meke, kynde, and stable:  
 Late never man reprove them than,  
 Or call them variable.

But rather, pray God that we may  
To them be comfortable;  
Which sometime proveth such, as he loveth,  
Yf they be charytable.  
For syth men wolde that women sholde  
Be meke to them each one,  
Moche more ought they to God obey,  
And serve but hym alone.

## THE LEGENDS OF ARTHUR AND THE ROUND TABLE

“SO upon Trinity Sunday at night King Arthur dreamed a wonderful dream, and that was this: that him seemed he sat upon a chaflet in a chair, and the chair was fast to a wheel, and thereupon sat King Arthur in the richest cloth of gold that might be made; and the king thought there was under him, far from him, an hideous deep black water, and therein were all manner of serpents and worms and wild beasts, foul and horrible; and suddenly the king thought the wheel turned up-so-down, and he fell among the serpents, and every beast took him by a limb. Then the king cried as he lay in his bed and slept: Help! And then knights, squires, and yeomen waked the king.”

Thus Malory relates Arthur's dream of Fortune's Wheel on the eve of his fatal battle with Modred. Perhaps if it had not been for the officious attendants Arthur's dream might have taken a new turn. He might have seen himself rising out of the black water into the sunlight, rising ever and ever higher till there was no king of history or legend more famed and honored than he.

Indeed, the true history of Arthur is an almost incredible example of what the goddess of Fame and Fortune may do for her favorites. All that we know of the historic Arthur is contained in a few lines in the 'Historia Britonum' of Nennius, compiled in South Wales in the ninth century from older materials. In a passage dealing with the Saxon conquests in Britain early in the sixth century we read: "Then Arthur fought against them in those days, together with the kings of the Britons, but he himself was a war-chief." Nennius names twelve of Arthur's victories: at the eighth Arthur bore the image of the Virgin on his shoulders (a mistranslation for shield), and a great slaughter was made of the pagans. At the twelfth, on Mount Badon, Arthur alone killed 960 men. It is now generally agreed that though the details may be apocryphal, Arthur was a historical figure who, as William of Malmesbury puts it, "for a long time sustained the declining fortunes of his native land and incited the uncrushed courage of the people to war." But the Saxon repulse was temporary: the Britons were driven into the mountains of Wales, among the moors of Devon and Cornwall, and across the sea to Armorica, henceforth to be called Little Britain or Brittany. Arthur's name and prowess, though for a brief time they had risen on the turn of Fortune's Wheel, had they not descended forever into the black pit of oblivion?

Nothing is more startling, then, than to discover that six hundred years later men of Cornwall and Brittany would assault with blows and brickbats anyone who denied that Arthur still lived and would return to deliver his Britons. Soon after 1200, Layamon, a descendant of Saxons, had adopted the British war-chief as the national hero of his Saxon enemies, and prophesied his return "to help his English!" A hundred years later a French poet placed him among the Nine Worthies or Conquerors, along with Cæsar, Alexander, and Charlemagne. From Iceland to Sicily, from Jerusalem to Dublin, the knights of the Round Table were famous. And needless to say, even in the twentieth century their renown still lives; Parsifal and Tristan, Galahad and Guinevere — they are household words.

What had happened to bring about this amazing resurrection of the obscure British war-chief, to make him the hope of his race for a thousand years after his death, and to endow him with the diadem and scepter of medieval romance?

The answer is happily expressed by the English medievalist, W. P. Ker: "Whether in the Teutonic countries, which in one of their corners preserved a record of old mythology, or in the Celtic, which allowed mythology, though never forgotten, to fall into a kind of neglect and to lose its original meaning, the value of mythology is equally recognizable, and it is equally clear that mythology is nothing more nor less than Romance. Everything in the poets that is most enthralling through the mere charm of wonder, from the land of the Golden Fleece to that of the Holy Grail, is more or less nearly related to mythology. . . . The barbarous terror of a world not realized becomes the wonder of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' or of 'Hyperion.'" One might add, "of the 'Morte Darthur' and 'Parsifal.'" It is because the human Arthur was apotheosized and became a central figure in the phantasmagoria of Celtic myth that he has become a king more glorious than any who wore earthly crown.

Christianity in Celtdom pursued a policy of friendly compromise. The Celtic cross is a compromise between the solar circle and the instrument of salvation. Cromm Cruaich, whose golden idol St. Patrick overthrew in the sixth century, was worshiped in County Clare in 1844; and Manannan, the sea-god, is still held in awe in Mayo. Many modern Irish folk-tales can be traced back to pagan myths. It is clear that a vast quantity of pagan lore and legend survived the Christianization of Ireland and Wales. The mingling of Irish and Welsh traditions of the gods which took place in Western Wales has left confused survivals in four tales which begin Lady Guest's 'Mabinogion.' A close scrutiny of these tales will show us how Arthurian romance began. Three of the divine figures who play a part in them — Manawydan, Gwri Gwallt Euryn, and Teyrnon — are named among Arthur's warriors in the later Welsh tale of 'Kilhwch and Olwen.' Still others, Bran, Llew, Pryderi, Gilfaethwy son of Don, Rhiannon, reappear in French Arthurian

romances as Bron, Lyon or Lionel, Perceval, Giflet son of Do, and Niniane or Nimue. A fuller account of these Welsh sources of Arthurian romance will be found in the article on Welsh Literature. Here let us confine our attention to an ancient mythological poem which affords one of the clearest analogies to the French stories of the Round Table cycle. The poem and its analogue are to be found among the selections that follow and are entitled 'The Harryings of Annwn' and 'Perceval in Annwn.'

Annwn is the Welsh name for the Other World or abode of the gods, and the main subject of the poem seems to be a harrying expedition conducted by Arthur and his warriors in his ship Prydwen against the island fortress of Annwn. Though most of Arthur's men were slain, Llŵch Lleminawc succeeded in carrying off the caldron of the Head or Chief of Annwn. The same story, in rationalized form, is told in 'Kilhwch and Olwen,' but though it is certain that Llŵch Lleminawc or Llawynawc, originally the Irish god Lug, comes down into romance as the chief of Arthur's knights, Lancelot du Lac, no story of a similar foray is told in French. But when we examine the poem closely to discover the features which it assigns to Annwn, it is not difficult to find their French counterparts. Here is an island fortress, four-cornered, where dwells the elder god Pwyll, Head of Annwn, a glass fortress containing a sentinel with whom it was difficult to converse, a fortress containing a lamenting prisoner, and by contrast a place of wassailing. Another poem tells us that Caer Siddi was known to the god Manawydd, the old sea-god, and that it contained a fountain of delicious drink. Look at the account of Perceval's voyage in 'Perlesvaus,' a French prose romance of about 1200, and observe that each of these features is clearly recognizable, except that the fortress of glass (French *de voire*) has become a round vessel of ivory (French *d'ivoire*). Pryderi, the younger divinity mentioned in the Welsh poem, can be identified with Perceval, who is to return and rule in his island kingdom, and the caldron of the Head of Annwn is one of the prototypes of the Grail. The completeness and preciseness of the parallel show conclusively that a connection existed between Welsh myth and French romance, a connection which I have discussed at length in my 'Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance.'

How did Arthur and his court of gods pass from Wales to the Continent? There is evidence that by 1000 Welsh tales had passed down through Cornwall or directly by sea to Brittany, and there in the hands of Breton reciters took on new life. For these Bretons had come to know French and were in touch with the courtly life of the neighboring duchies. The French laughed at their belief in Arthur's return, but were enthralled by these picturesque and mysterious adventures. The first clear proof of the spread of the Breton tales is at Modena cathedral, where was carved between 1099 and 1106 the imprisonment of Winlogée (Guinevere) in a moated castle with two entrances, while Artus, Galvagin, Che, and other knights attempt her rescue. This is the famous story of the abduction of Guinevere, told in many later versions;

and it is significant that it can be traced back to an Irish myth concerning the abduction of Blathnat, "Little Flower," by one sun-god and her rescue by another.

Now while these Breton tales were captivating audiences in France, Italy, and England by the sheer charm of their endless adventures and were giving its new connotation to the word Romance, which originally denoted the tongue in which these tales were told, they were nevertheless somewhat rambling and meaningless. Their old mythological import was dimming. Though there are striking survivals in the marvelous strength of Gawain which waxed and waned with the mounting and sinking of the sun in the sky, in the association of the Grail King's powers with the fertility of Nature, in the recognition of the divine nature of Morgan the goddess, Merlin the Grail Bearer, and others, yet much had become incomprehensible or absurd. Probably the legends of the Table Round would have lost their popularity far sooner if they had not become the vehicle for three of the most powerful forces of the twelfth century, namely: the imperialist ambitions of the English crown, the doctrine of courtly love, and religious mysticism.

The first of these influences stamps the 'Historia Regum Britanniae' [History of the Kings of Britain] of Geoffrey of Monmouth, published in 1136, which immediately gave King Arthur a standing and prestige in the world of clerks and chroniclers which he had not possessed before. To be sure, there were scoffers like Giraldus Cambrensis, who tells the amusing story of the Welshman who was able to see devils crowding about him; when the gospel was placed on his chest, they promptly fled, but when it was replaced by Geoffrey's work, they swarmed more thickly than ever. Yet in the main Arthur became established as the descendant of Brutus, great-grandson of Æneas and eponymous conqueror of Britain, and he rivaled Charlemagne as a sovereign of all western Europe. Geoffrey refers at the beginning to the deeds of the British kings, particularly Arthur, as pleasantly rehearsed from memory by many peoples, but declares he has been unable to find anything in the chroniclers about them till Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, lent him a most ancient book in the British language. At the close he proudly bids the contemporary historians be silent as to the kings of the Britons since they have not this book which Walter brought out of Brittany. Now there is a considerable amount of internal evidence that the main part of Geoffrey's chapters on Arthur was based on Welsh traditions that had passed on to the Cornish and Bretons. It seems probable that this material had already been worked up into something that purported to be a history of the British kings, and that Geoffrey recast and expanded it, drawing largely upon the Latin historians for his oratory and military strategy, and upon contemporary manners and politics for additional details.

The political implications of the work seem clear. Geoffrey was an ambitious *magister* at Oxford, a professor we should call him today. He must

have composed most of his work during the reign of Henry Beauclerc, patron of scholars, but when Henry died, Geoffrey seems to have seized the first opportunity when Stephen, his successor, and Robert of Gloucester came to Oxford, to dedicate his work to them. So far as his personal ambitions went, Geoffrey hardly attained his goal, for it was not till 1152 that he was made bishop of the insignificant see of St. Asaph, and he died two years later. His work would doubtless have received its due reward had it seen the light under a strong king like Henry I or his grandson Henry II, for it afforded precedents of the most valuable kind for any claims which the English crown might put forward. There was not a country of Western Europe except Spain which Arthur had not, according to Geoffrey, conquered, and even Rome itself Arthur had humiliated in his great war with Lucius and Leo. And had not his ancestors, Belinus, Constantine, and Maximian (the historical Maximus) seized Rome itself? Here, if ever an English king should claim the crown of the Cæsars, was a title ready to his hand. These conquests of Arthur's were by no means pure inventions. Some have their origin in Nennius, some in other Welsh traditions, and the great war with Lucius Hiberus is based on a famous war with Llŵch the Irishman, and its scene has been transferred from Guallia [Wales] to Gallia [Gaul]. With these are mingled the legends of Arthur's birth and death localized in Cornwall, the Continental legend of the giant of Mont St. Michel, the imaginative account of Arthur's crowning at Caerleon, inspired by the Roman remains there, and a brief reference to the famous tradition that he was borne unto the island of Avalon for the healing of his wounds.

It was probably the political value of Geoffrey's 'History' which in 1155 prompted a certain Norman cleric, Wace, to turn it into a French poem called the 'Brut' and to dedicate it to the famous Eleanor of Aquitaine, wife of Henry II. Wace naturally adopts the more picturesque style of contemporary French verse, and loves to depict with the color and detail of medieval illumination the balder outline of Geoffrey. He knows well the tales of the Bretons and introduces from them references to the Round Table and the hope of Arthur's return. About 1200 an English priest of the Severn valley, Layamon, used an expanded version of Wace to compose a vivid and sinewy 'Brut,' full of the clang of old Saxon rhythms and alliteration. The images, too, remind us of 'Beowulf' at every turn. Arthur rushes "as the howling wolf, when he cometh from the wood behung with snow." The Saxons in rout are "like the wild crane in the moor-fen, when his flight is impaired and swift hawks pursue after him and hounds with mischief meet him in the reeds." Thus, ever since, the name of Arthur has served to inspire to poetry the descendants of his bitterest foes.

Geoffrey had a great influence on chronicle literature, and furnished to Shakespeare the themes of 'Cymbeline' and 'Lear,' but his influence on romance itself was not large. Romance grew and flourished mainly as it sup-

plied a happy narrative expression of the new spirit of chivalry. This spirit Wace expresses through the mouth of Gawain, who declares: "Because of his lady's nobility a young man performs feats of chivalry." But for the elaboration of this dominant thought of the time Geoffrey's chronicle offered no chance, whereas the thousands of Breton tales of love and adventure seemed made for the purpose. A certain Welshman Bleheris, we learn, told the Count of Poitiers, probably the famous troubadour William VII or his son, certain tales, and his repertoire included a Tristan romance, doubtless picked up in Brittany. This fine tragic tale, formed on the nucleus of the Irish 'Elopement of Diarmaid and Grainne,' provided the perfect example of the theories of courtly love, which set aside the feudal marriage and the jealous husband as things of no account beside the claims of passion, and which made of passion an almost religious cult, with its obligations of secrecy, fidelity, and prowess. It is this fiery seriousness which raises the intrigues of the lovers far above the backstairs plottings of the *fabliaux*. The love potion which Tristan and Ysolt drank on the memorable seas between Dublin and Tintagel was a symbol of the spirit of the age.

That spirit found its personification in Eleanor of Aquitaine, to whom Wace dedicated his 'Brut.' Granddaughter of the famous troubadour Count of Poitiers, she very likely heard as a girl the tales of the famous Bleheris. In time she became the most powerful woman of her day, famous for her advocacy of the new code of love, and curiously enough wherever her influence appears we find the story of Tristan favored. It was at the Angevin court that Thomas, about 1185, wrote his great poem, which was the source of the even greater works of Gottfried von Strassburg and Wagner. At the court of Marie de Champagne, Eleanor's daughter by King Louis VII, Chrestien de Troyes wrote his romances of love. Between 1165 and 1180 he composed a lost poem on King Mark and Ysolt, an artful anti-Tristan, 'Cliges,' and other Arthurian poems. Three of them correspond to the Welsh romances of 'Geraint,' 'The Lady of the Fountain,' and 'Peredur,' and must be based on the same Breton tales. It is characteristic of these as of most romances that Arthur plays but a small and not always glorious part. The real subject is the loves and adventures of one or another of his knights.

The romance most characteristic of the fashionable doctrines of the day is the 'Lancelot' or 'Knight of the Cart,' carried out expressly according to the instructions of Chrestien's patroness. The theme is the traditional abduction of Guinevere and her rescue by Lancelot. Because Lancelot during his pursuit hesitates for two steps to mount a cart, fearing the consequent disgrace, the queen, even after he has accomplished her rescue, will not speak to him, whereupon Lancelot attempts suicide by hanging himself from his saddle! He crosses a bridge consisting of a long sword, on hands and knees; he resists the seduction of a damsel; he becomes so lost in a love-trance that he is thrice challenged and then hurled by a charging knight into a ford before

he comes to his senses. When he discovers some strands of Guinevere's hair on a comb by the road, "he raises them a hundred thousand times to his eyes and mouth; he holds in contempt essence of pearl, treacle, and the cure for pleurisy; even for St. Martin and St. James he had no need, such was his trust in his lady's hair." It is no wonder that the old Celtic tales charged with this new religion of chivalry and love should have won a warmer and a longer welcome than the stern and pious epics of Charlemagne. The Arthurian romances combined the allurements of the adventure and mystery story with that of the most up-to-date society novel. The great compilation known as the 'Prose Lancelot,' written between 1200 and 1225, became one of the most popular of books. Chaucer alludes to it as a book which women hold in full great reverence. Dante's Paolo and Francesca find in it their Galeotto. Through it Lancelot and Guinevere take their places with Tristan and Ysolt among the world's famous lovers.

Politics and chivalry contributed powerfully to the spread of Arthurian romance, and modified its development; so too did religion through its influence on the Grail legend. Chrestien, whose 'Perceval' furnishes the earliest version of this theme preserved to us, tells how his hero is directed by a venerable fisherman to his castle; finds him mysteriously arrived before himself, lying on a rich couch before the fire; beholds first a youth with bleeding spear, then a damsel with a jewel-studded grail (or rather deep dish), and other figures which pass before him, but asks no question, and on the next morning wakes to find the castle deserted. Later we learn that his host was the Fisher King, wounded in battle, the grail was a holy thing which fed the Fisher King's father with a wafer it contained, and Perceval by failing to ask concerning it had failed to heal the king and had brought war upon his land. Though the meaning of all this has been the subject of violent controversy, it seems fairly certain that the story is pagan and relates the visit of Pryderi to the faery castle of his uncle, the sea-god Bran; that the Grail is a composite of the horn of Bran, which provided whatever liquor was desired, the caldron of Bran, which healed whoever was put into it, and the caldron of the Chief of Annwn, which would not boil the food of a coward; that Bran's wounding in battle, of which we read in the 'Mabinogion,' had seasonal significance, and that when on a second visit the young Pryderi asks the ritual question he renews not only the vigor of the old god but also the fertility of the land. When we find that Gawain is also a Grail hero, we need not be surprised, for the Welsh identified Pryderi with Gwri, the original of Gawain. [See Peredur version in 'Welsh Literature.']

We all know how this story became Christianized. The bleeding lance was identified with the lance with which the Roman soldier Longinus pierced the side of Christ. The Grail became identified with the cup of the Last Supper, and it was related how Joseph of Arimathea had caught with it the blood which flowed from the wounds of the Crucified, and had been miraculously fed by

it in prison. Other legends relate variously how the holy vessel was brought to Britain. The most elaborate account is full of reminiscences of the Apocrypha and Celtic legends of the saints, through which there glimmers here and there a fragment of the old mythology. The Grail is guarded by a line of holy kings, who successively are wounded in the thighs because of lust or presumption. The knights who win to the sight of the sacred bowl are distinguished by chastity and faith. A fascinating medley of sacred and profane is the 'Perlesvaus,' composed about 1200, and beautifully translated by Sebastian Evans as 'The High History of the Holy Graal.' The most complete Christianization of the legend is the 'Queste del Saint Graal,' written by a Cistercian monk not long after and followed by Malory in his Grail books. It is a work of extraordinary ingenuity. The name Galaad is the Vulgate form of Gilead, meaning Mount of Testimony, and interpreted as a reference to Christ. Probably it has been substituted for Galaad or some other form of Gawain. Solomon's Ship, originally the magic coracle of the sea-god Manannan, has been interpreted as the Church or Temple, of which Solomon was the builder. The many Maimed Kings who await the coming of the destined knight have become so many Simeons, who pronounce over Christ-Galaad a sort of *Nunc Dimittis*. The scene in Arthur's hall at Pentecost where the gathered knights are "alighted" of the grace of the Holy Ghost and take upon them the quest, is obviously modeled on the scene in the upper room where the gathered disciples receive the Holy Ghost and depart on their missionary errands. The scene in Carbonek where the twelve knights receive the sacrament from the holy vessel at the hands of Jesus Christ himself is of course a re-enactment in the Grail Castle of the Last Supper. Here romance and ascetic religion have blended into an artistic union that is one of the glories of medieval literature. Less ingenious but more human is Wolfram von Eschenbach's great poem, 'Parzival,' the main source of Wagner's opera. The hero is no sinless, invincible Messianic vision like Galaad, but one who through his simple blundering makes himself dear to our hearts. The Grail Quest, instead of symbolizing the sacramental raptures of the mystic, is interpreted as the way of compassion and love. It is when Parzival asks of the anguished Anfortas, "What aileth thee now, mine uncle?" that the miracle is accomplished and the Maimed King is healed.

After 1225 no great Arthurian literature was composed in France or Germany, and it is to England we must turn for the later masterpieces, 'Gawain and the Green Knight' and Malory's 'Morte Darthur.' Both works owe much to French sources, but both have been transmuted by the author's genius. 'Gawain and the Green Knight,' written about 1370 by a court poet from Cheshire or from Lancashire, can ultimately be traced to a combination of three stories about the testing of Cuchulinn by Curoi, found separately in an Irish text of the eighth century. As it stands, however, it is a vivid portrayal of life in Chaucer's England; in fact it has been called the first English

country-house novel. Opening in Arthur's court at a New Year's Day revel with the giving of gifts and laughter, the scene passes to a castle newly built, with its chalk-white chimneys and battlements looking as if they were cut out of paper. Within, we see the fireplace with its coals, the table set with white napery, the service of fish, the adjournment to the parlor for spices and wine, the love passages of hostess and guest. Then we read in detail of the hunting of the deer, the boar, and the fox. None of this is perfunctory; all is handled with a due sense of proportion and with an infectious vivacity. And Gawain proves himself a complete prototype of the English gentleman, humble, courteous, brave, true to his word. He and Chaucer's "verray parfit gentle knight" are companion pieces.

The 'Morte Darthur' of Sir Thomas Malory, printed by Caxton in 1485, is a fitting close to medieval English literature. It summarizes not only Arthurian romance but also an age that was passing. Not that a Philip Sidney in the next age might not reproduce most of the characteristics of Gawain, and a Spenser might not represent Arthur as the embodiment of the twelve virtues. But gunpowder was rendering obsolete the knight and the castle; scepticism was destroying miracles and wonders; Achilles was soon to rival Lancelot, and Don Quixote was to make him ridiculous. But there in the first English prose that possesses an immortal charm we have by good fortune our great heritage of romance. Thomas Malory was a Warwickshire knight, of whom we know that he served in the French wars under "the Father of Courtesy," Richard de Beauchamp; was a member of Parliament in 1445; was involved in the Wars of the Roses; was excluded from a pardon in 1468 and probably spent a few years in prison; completed his book in 1469; and was buried in London in 1471, with the words *Valens Miles* on his tomb. The 'Morte Darthur' is very uneven. It illustrates all the vices of romance: monotony, inconsistency, lack of characterization. But the best parts, such as the Book of Balin, the Grail Books, and the final catastrophe, are as magnificent in their kind as the contemporary French and Flemish tapestries. Here noble spirit speaks through a language artistic beyond the range of artifice. Again and again Malory improves upon his French original in the point and perfection of his phrasing. It is Malory's great service that he has given to the British race a worthy version of its greatest legend.

Thus has been fulfilled Merlin's prophecy, "that a king should come of Uther Pendragon; that gleemen should make a board of this king's breast, and thereto should sit poets most good, and eat their will ere they thence departed, and draw wine-draughts from this king's tongue, and drink and revel day and night. This game should last them to the world's end."

ROGER SHERMAN LOOMIS

## THE HARRYINGS OF ANNWN

[This poem from the 'Book of Taliessin,' a thirteenth-century manuscript, may well be several centuries older. Annwn is a Welsh name for the Other World or abode of the gods, and it is here alluded to under several other titles — the Fortress of the Fays, the Glass Fortress, the Four-Cornered Fortress. The poem alludes to expeditions by Arthur and his warriors, of whom Llŵch Lleminawc is chief, to carry off the caldron of the Head or Chief of Annwn. Seven times they filled Arthur's ship Prydwen, but only seven warriors returned. The antiquity of the poem and its allusive style render any translation somewhat dubious, but curiously enough in a passage from a French romance of about 1200 we find a description of Perceval's visit to the Other World, where many features of Annwn reappear: the island, the four-cornered fortress, two immortal lords, wassailing, a mysterious prisoner, an unresponsive warrior, not, to be sure, in a tower of glass (French *de voire*) but in a round vessel of ivory (French *d'ivoire*). See selection entitled 'From Perlesvaus.']

**I** *ADORE the noble Lord and high King [God],  
Who extended his sway over the world's strand.*  
Complete was the captivity of Gwair in Caer Siddi [Fortress of the Fays]  
[Lured thither (?)] through the emissary of Pwyll and Pryderi.  
Before him no one entered into it,  
Into the heavy dark chain which held the faithful youth;  
And because of the harrings of Annwn grievously did he sing,  
And till doom will he remain a bard afterwards.  
Three freights of Prydwen went we into it —  
Seven alone did we return from Caer Siddi.

*I am a seeker of praise, if my song be heard.*  
In the four-cornered Caer — four its revolutions [?].  
In the first word it would be spoken of the caldron;  
By the breath of nine maidens it would be kindled.  
The Head of Annwyn's caldron — what is it like?  
A rim it has, with pearls, around its border:  
It boils not a coward's food: it would not be perjured.  
The shining sword of Llŵch was lifted to it,  
And in the hand of Lleminawc it was left.  
And before the door of Hell's gate lamps were burning.  
And when we accompanied Arthur — a brilliant effort —  
Seven alone did we return from the Caer of the Perfect Ones.

*I am a seeker of praise, if my song be heard.*

In the four-cornered Caer in the island of the strong door,  
The dusk and the blackness mingle.

The sparkling wine their drink before their retinue.

Three freights of Prydwen went we on sea:

Seven alone did we return from Caer Rigor.

*I merit not the laurel of the ruler of letters.*

Beyond the Glass Caer they had not seen Arthur's valor.

Three score sentinels stood on the wall:

Hard it was found to converse with their sentinel.

Three freights of Prydwen went with Arthur,

Seven alone did they return from Caer Goludd.

## GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH

### ARTHUR'S CORONATION

UPON the approach of the feast of Pentecost, Arthur, the better to demonstrate his joy after such triumphant success, and for the more solemn observation of that festival, and reconciling the minds of the princes that were now subject to him, resolved, during that season, to hold a magnificent court, to place the crown upon his head, and to invite all the kings and dukes under his subjection to the solemnity. And when he had communicated his design to his familiar friends, he pitched upon the city of Legions as a proper place for his purpose. For besides its great wealth above the other cities, its situation, which was in Glamorganshire, upon the River Usk, near the Severn Sea, was most pleasant and fit for so great a solemnity; for on one side it was washed by that noble river, so that the kings and princes from the countries beyond the seas might have the convenience of sailing up to it. On the other side, the beauty of the meadows and groves, and magnificence of the royal palaces, with lofty, gilded roofs that adorned it, made it even rival the grandeur of Rome. It was also famous for two churches: whereof one was built in honor of the martyr Julius, and adorned with a choir of virgins, who had devoted themselves wholly to the service of God; but the other, which was founded in memory of St. Aaron, his companion, and maintained a convent of canons, was the third metropolitan church of Britain. Besides, there was a college of two hundred philosophers, who, being learned in astronomy and the other arts, were diligent in observing the courses of the stars, and gave Arthur true predictions of the events that would happen at that time. In this place, therefore, which afforded such delights, were prepara-

tions made for the ensuing festival. Ambassadors were sent into several kingdoms to invite to court the princes both of Gaul and all the adjacent islands . . . who came with such a train of mules, horses, and rich furniture as it is difficult to describe. Besides these, there remained no prince of any consideration on this side of Spain, who came not upon this invitation. And no wonder, when Arthur's munificence, which was celebrated over the whole world, made him beloved by all people.

When all these were assembled together in the city, upon the day of the solemnity, the archbishops were conducted to the palace, in order to place the crown upon the king's head. Therefore Dubricius, inasmuch as the court was kept in his diocese, made himself ready to celebrate the office, and undertook the ordering of whatever related to it. As soon as the king was invested with his royal habiliments, he was conducted in great pomp to the metropolitan church, supported on each side by two archbishops, and having four kings, *viz.*, of Scotland, Cornwall, Dyfed, and Gwynedd, whose right it was, bearing four golden swords before him. He was also attended with a concert of all sorts of music, which made most excellent harmony. On another part was the queen, dressed out in her richest ornaments, conducted by the archbishops and bishops to the Temple of Virgins; the four queens also of the kings last mentioned, bearing before her four white doves, according to ancient custom; and after her there followed a retinue of women, making all imaginable demonstrations of joy. When the whole procession was ended, so transporting was the harmony of the musical instruments and voices, whereof there was a vast variety in both churches, that the knights who attended were in doubt which to prefer, and therefore crowded from the one to the other by turns, and were far from being tired with the solemnity, though the whole day had been spent in it. At last, when divine service was over at both churches, the king and queen put off their crowns, and putting on their lighter ornaments, went to the banquet, he to one palace with the men, she to another with the women. For the Britons still observed the ancient custom of Troy, by which the men and women used to celebrate their festivals apart. When they had all taken their seats according to precedence, Caius, the sewer, in rich robes of ermine, with a thousand young noblemen, all in like manner clothed with ermine, served up the dishes. From another part, Bedoer, the butler, was followed with the same number of attendants, in various habits, who waited with all kinds of cups and drinking vessels. In the queen's palace were innumerable waiters, dressed with variety of ornaments, all performing their respective offices; which, if I should describe particularly, I should draw out the history to a tedious length. For at that time Britain had arrived at such a pitch of grandeur, that in abundance of riches, luxury or ornaments, and politeness of inhabitants, it far surpassed all other kingdoms. The knights in it that were famous for feats of chivalry wore their clothes and arms all of the same color and fashion: and the women also, no less celebrated for their

wit, wore all the same kind of apparel; and esteemed none worthy of their love but such as had given a proof of their valor in three several battles. Thus was the valor of the men an encouragement for the women's chastity, and the love of the women a spur to the soldiers' bravery.

## LAYAMON

### ARTHUR'S FIGHT WITH COLGRIM

**T**HEN came tidings to Arthur the king, that Howel, his relation, was sick lying in Clud — therefore he was sorry — and there he left him. Forth he gan to push exceeding hastily, until he beside Bath approached to a plain; there he alighted, and all his knights; and on with their burnies the stern men, and he in five divisions separated his army.

When he had duly set all, and it all beseemed, then he put on his burny, fashioned of steel, that an elvish smith made, with his excellent craft; it was named Wygar, which Widia wrought. His shanks he covered with hose of steel. Caliburn, his sword, he hung by his side; it was wrought in Avalon, with magic craft. A helm he set on his head, high of steel; thereon was many gemstone, all encompassed with gold; it was Uther's, the noble king's; it was named Goswhit, each other unlike. He hung on his neck a precious shield; its name was in British called Pridwen; therein was engraved with red gold tracings a precious image of God's mother. His spear he took in hand, that was named Ron. When he had all his weeds, then leapt he on his steed. Then might he behold, who stood beside, the fairest knight, that ever host should lead; never saw any man better knight none, than Arthur he was, noblest of race! Then called Arthur with loud voice: "Lo! where here before us the heathen hounds, who slew our ancestors with their wicked crafts; and they are to us in land loathest of all things. Now march we to them, and starkly lay on them, and avenge worthily our kindred, and our realm, and avenge the mickle shame by which they have disgraced us, that they over the waves should have come to Dartmouth. And all they are forsworn, and all they shall be destroyed; they shall be all put to death, with the Lord's assistance! March we now forward, fast together, even all as softly as if we thought no evil; and when we come to them, myself I will commence; foremost of all the fight I will begin. Now we shall ride, and over the land glide; and no man on pain of his life make noise, but fare quickly; the Lord us aid!" Then Arthur the rich man gan to ride; he proceeded over the weald, and Bath would seek.

The tiding came to Childric, the strong and the rich, that Arthur came with host all ready to fight. Childric and his brave men leapt them to horse, and grasped their weapons — they knew themselves to be hateful.

Arthur saw this, noblest of kings; he saw a heathen earl advance against him, with seven hundred knights, all ready to fight. The earl himself approached before all his troop, and Arthur himself rode before all his host. Arthur the bold took Ron in hand; he extended (couched) the stark shaft, the stiff-minded king; his horse he let run, so that all the earth dinned. His shield he drew to his breast — the king was incensed — he smote Borel the earl throughout the breast, so that the heart sundered. And the king called anon, "The foremost is dead! Now help us the Lord, and the heavenly queen, who the Lord bore!" Then called Arthur, noblest of kings: "Now to them! now to them! The commencement is well done!" The Britons laid on them, as men should do on the wicked; they gave bitter strokes with axes and with swords. There fell of Childric's men full two thousand, so that never Arthur lost ever one of his men; there were the Saxish men of all folk most wretched, and the Alemainish men most miserable of all people! Arthur with his sword wrought destruction; all that he smote at, it was soon destroyed! The king was all enraged as is the wild boar, when he in beech-wood meeteth many swine. Childric saw this, and gan him to turn, and bent him over the Avon, to save himself. And Arthur approached to him, as if it were a lion, and drove them to the flood; there many were slain; they sunk to the bottom five-and-twenty hundred, so that all Avon's stream was bridged with steel! Childric over the water fled, with fifteen hundred knights; he thought forth to push, and sail over the sea. Arthur saw Colgrim climb to the mount, retreat to the hill that standeth over Bath; and Baldulf went after him, with seven thousand knights; they thought on the hill to withstand nobly, defend them with weapons, and do injury to Arthur.

When Arthur saw, noblest of kings, where Colgrim withstood, and eke battle wrought, then called the king, keenly loud: "My bold thanes, advance to the hills! For yesterday was Colgrim of all men keenest, but now it is to him all as to the goat, where he guards the hill; high upon the hill he fighteth with horns, when the wild wolf approacheth toward him. Though the wolf be alone, without each herd, and there were in a fold five hundred goats, the wolf to them goeth, and all them biteth. So will I now today Colgrim all destroy; I am the wolf and he is the goat; the man shall die!" Then yet called Arthur, noblest of kings: "Yesterday was Baldulf of all knights boldest, but now he standeth on the hill, and beholdeth the Avon, how the steel fishes lie in the stream! Armed with sword, their life is destroyed; their scales float like gold-dyed shields; there float their fins, as if it were spears. These are marvelous things come to this land; such beasts on the hill, such fishes in the stream! Yesterday was the kaiser keenest of all kings; now is he become a hunter, and horns him follow; he flieth over the broad weald; his hounds bark; he hath beside Bath his hunting deserted; from his deer he flieth, and we it shall fell; and his bold threats bring to nought; and so we shall enjoy our rights gained." Even with the words that the king said, he drew his shield

high before his breast; he grasped his long spear, his horse he gan spur. Nigh all so swift as the fowl flieth, five-and-twenty thousand of brave men, mad under arms, followed the king; they proceeded to the hill with great strength, and smote upon Colgrim with exceeding smart strokes. And Colgrim them there received, and felled the Britons to ground; in the foremost attack fell five hundred.

Arthur saw that, noblest of kings, and wrathed him wondrously much; and thus gan to call Arthur, the noble man: "Where be ye, Britons, my bold men! Here stand before us our foes all chosen; my good warriors, lay we them to the ground!" Arthur grasped his sword right, and he smote a Saxish knight, so that the sword that was so good at the teeth stopt; and he smote another, who was this knight's brother, so that his helm and his head fell to the ground; the third blow he soon gave, and a knight in two clave. Then were the Britons greatly emboldened, and laid on the Saxons laws (blows) most strong with their long spears and with swords most strong; so that the Saxons there fell, and made their death-time, by hundreds and hundreds sank to the ground, by thousands and thousands fell there ever on the ground! When Colgrim saw where Arthur came toward him, Colgrim might not for the slaughtered flee on any side; there fought Baldulf beside his brother. Then called Arthur with loud voice: "Here I come, Colgrim! to the realm we two shall reach; now we shall divide this land, as shall be to thee loathest of all!" Even with the words that the king said, his broad sword he up heaved, and hardily down struck, and smote Colgrim's helm, so that he clove it in the midst, and clove asunder the burny's hood, so that it (the sword) stopt at the breast. And he smote toward Baldulf with his left hand, and struck off the head, forth with the helm.

Then laughed Arthur, the noble king, and thus gan to speak with gameful words: "Lie thou there, Colgrim; thou wert climbed too high; and Baldulf, thy brother, lie by thy side; now set I all this kingdom in your own hands; dales and downs, and all my good folk! Thou climbed on this hill wondrously high, as if thou wouldst ascend to heaven; but now thou shalt to hell, and there thou mayest know much of thy kindred. And greet thou there Hengest, that was fairest of knights, Ebissa, and Ossa, Octa, and more of thy kin, and bid them there dwell winter and summer; and we shall here in land live in bliss; pray for your souls, that happiness never come to them; and here shall your bones lie, beside Bath!"

## FROM THE 'TRISTAN' OF THOMAS

## THE PARTING OF THE LOVERS

**B**UT Tristram might by no means restrain his will and desire, and therefore he used every occasion that he might attain unto it, and he fared thus until on a day they lay both together in a garden and Tristram held Queen Ysolt in his embrace, and well they thought them safe. By strange adventure there cometh upon them the King, the which the dwarf leadeth thither. He thought to take them with the deed, but thanked be God, when he found them sleeping, they were in seemly case. The King beheld them and said unto the dwarf:

"Abide me here a little space. I will go up into the palace and bring hither some of my barons: they shall behold how we have found them. Brent shall they be when it shall be proved upon them."

Therewithal Tristram awoke and espied the King, but made no semblaunt till he was departed unto the palace. Tristram arose and said: "Alas, Ysolt, my love, awake thee now. With treason are we waited. The King hath espied all we have done, and goeth unto the palace for his men. He will, if he may, cause us to be taken together and by his sentence brent to ashes. I will go away, fair love: dread thee not for thy life, for thou canst not be proved guilty if no man be found here save thee alone. But I will repair me forth into another land, and for thy sake will I flee mirths and seek exile, despise joy and follow jeopardy. Such dole have I for this parting, never more shall I have delight the days of my life. My sweet lady, I pray thee, never put me out of thy remembrance: love me when I am from thee far as thou hast loved me near. I dare not, lady, longer abide. Now as I take my leave, kiss me."

From that kiss Ysolt held back and hearkened his words and saw his tears: her eyes streamed and from her heart she sighed and tenderly said: "My love, fair sir, well it behoveth thee to have in remembrance this day when thou departest in such dolorous case. Such pain have I of this parting that never before have I known sorrow. No more, love, shall I have disport when I have lost thy solace, no more shall I have such pity nor such yearning sithen it befalleth me to part from thy love. Our bodies now must sunder, but love from us shall not sunder. In the mean while take thou this ring: for my love's sake, my lover, guard it: it shall be for writing and seal, surety and solace to mind us of our loves and of this parting."

They parted then with much mourning and kissed together right heartily.

## TRISTRAM'S CONSOLATION

Now Tristram let hasten his wrights all that he might, and it pleased him well under the rock: woodcarvers and goldsmiths labored there and all was now accomplished and made ready unto finishing. Then Tristram suffered the wrights to go home and conveyed them till they were gone out of the island and so home unto their own land. Now hath Tristram no fellow nigh but the giant, and they bare now all the labor of the wrights and joined together the vaulted chamber as the materials had been afore dressed by the wrights, all colored and gilt with the best art so that none might desire none better. Under the middes of the vault raised they up an image so beautiful of stature and countenance that no man beholding it might think otherwise than that life was in all the limbs, and so fair and so well wrought that in all the world one might not find a fairer image. And from the mouth arose a sweet savor that all the chamber was filled therewith as all the aromatic herbs that are costliest had been there. The good savor came from the image through this device, that Tristram had made in the breast under the paps in place of the heart an opening, and set therein a coffer full of such herbs that were sweetest in all the world, mingled with gold. This image in shape and beauty and stature so resembled unto Queen Ysolt as she had stood there herself, and was so lifelike as it had been on live. This image was so cunningly graven and so richly clad as beseemed the noblest queen. She had on her head a crown of pure gold wrought with all manner of skill and set with costliest jewels and of all colors, and in the leaf thereof that was in front upon her forehead stood a great emerald that never bare king nor queen its peer. In the right hand of the image was a wand or scepter; in the upper end it was carved in flowers by the subtlest smiths; the shaft of wood was all covered with gold and set with rings of stones; the gold leaf was the best gold of Araby: in the upper end of the wand was carved a bird with feathers of divers colors and wrought in act to clap its wings as it had been quick and living. This image was clad in the best purple and white furs; and for this cause was she clad in purple raiment that purple tokeneth the woe and sorrow and travail and misery that Ysolt endured for the sake of her love unto Tristram. In the left hand she held her ring and there was written the words that Queen Ysolt said at their parting:

Tristram, receive this ring in sign thou hold  
 In thy remembrance sure our loves of old,  
 Nor all forget the grief, the wrack, the moan  
 Thou for my sake and I for thine have known.

Under her feet was a pedestal cast in laton in the likeness of that evil dwarf had slandered and accused them unto the King. The Queen's image stood

upon his breast, seeming most as she trod him under her feet, and he lay under her feet crying as he were weeping. Near the image was wrought of fine gold a little plaything, her lapdog, shaking his head and ringing his bell, wrought with mickle cunning. On the other side of the dwarf stood a little image of Bringvain, the Queen's gentlewoman: she was well shapen as for her beauty and well adorned with the best apparel, and she held in her hand a hanap with a covercle, proffering it unto Queen Ysolt with a blithe visage: around the hanap were these words that said:

Receive thou, Queen Ysolt, this brevage dark  
That erst was made in Ireland for King Mark.

On the other side of the chamber whereas one entered, Tristram had made a great image in likeness of the giant, as he were standing there himself, one-legged, and brandishing with both hands over his shoulder his club of iron, for to defend the other image. He was clad in a great goatskin and a hairy, and the kirtle hung scant below and he was naked below the navel and he gnashed his teeth, and his eyes were wood as he would smite all those that came within. On the other side of the door stood a great lion, cast in laton and so cunningly fashioned that none of them that saw him deemed otherwise than he was alive. He stood on four feet and wound his tail about an image that was made after the Seneschal that slandered and accused Tristram unto King Mark. No man can show nor tell the subtlety that was in those images that Tristram let arear within the vault. And now hath he finished all that he intended in his mind and he gave it now unto the giant to rule and bade him as his thrall and servant to ward it so well that none should come nigh it, and he himself bare the keys both of the house and of the images, but the giant had all his other treasures. And it pleased Tristram well that he had thus brought the matter to an end.

When Tristram had finished his toil he rode home to his castle as he was wont, and ate and drank and slept by Ysolt his wife. Right dear was he unto his fellows, but he desired not to have fleshly delight with his wife, and he fared so secretly that no man discovered his intent nor countenance, for all weened that he lived in wedded wise as he should with her. And Ysolt also was so disposed that she hid it from every man and revealed it neither unto her kindred nor friends. But when he was away and wrought these images, her seemed full strange where he was and what he did. In such wise he rode home and returned again by a secret path that none was ware of him, and came unto the vaulted chamber, and ever when he came within before the image of Ysolt, he kissed her as oft as he came and took her in his embrace and put his arms about her neck as she had been on live, and with many loving words Tristram rehearsed afore the image the joys of great love and their teen and dolours and pains and woes. Much he kissed her when he was blithe,

but wroth was he when he was araged what through thought or dream, what through believing lies in his heart that she had forgotten him or that she had another lover or that she might not avoid to love another that is more to her will. This thought maketh him stray, and error pursueth his heart, and he doubteth if she may not turn her love unto fair Cariadoc. About her he is both daily and nightly, and serveth her and flattereth and oft chideth her as touching Tristram. Tristram doubteth whether when she hath not her desire she may not take thing that is in her power; for that she may not have him, she may not make another her lover. When in such anger he museth, he showeth hatred unto the image, he will not look upon it nor see nor speak to it. Then he bespeaketh Bringvain and saith:

"Fair damozel, to thee I complain of the fickleness and treachery that Ysolt, my love, doth unto me."

Whatsoever he thinketh he saith unto the image; then loseth he his assurance a little, and beholdeth Ysolt's hand, that would teach him the golden ring, and he seeth the cheer and the semblaunt that his lady made him at parting and remembereth him of the covenant made as they sundered. Then he weepeth and crieth pardon that ever he thought such folly and knoweth well that he is deceived of the madness that he hath had. For this cause made he the image that he would fain speak his heart, his good thought, and his foolish error, his pain and his joy of love, for he knew not to whom he might discover his longing and desire.

Translated by Roger Sherman Loomis

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## FROM 'PERLESVAUS'

### PERCEVAL IN ANNWN

**H**EREWITHAL is the story silent of Briant and talketh of Perceval, that the ship beareth away right swiftly; but so long hath he held battle therein that every one hath he slain of them that were in the ship save only the pilot that steereth her, for him hath he in covenant that he will believe in God and renounce his evil Law. Perceval is far from land so that he seeth nought but sea only, and the ship speedeth onward, and God guideth him, as one that believeth in Him and loveth Him and serveth Him of a good heart. The ship ran on by night and by day as it pleased God, until that they saw a castle and an island of the sea. He asked his pilot if he knew what castle it was. "Certes," saith he, "Not I, for so far

have we run that I know not neither the sea nor the stars." They come nigh the castle, and saw four that sounded bells at the four corners of the town, right sweetly, and they that sounded them were clad in white garments. They are come thither.

So soon as the ship had taken haven under the castle, the sea withdraweth itself back, so that the ship is left on dry land. None were therein save Perceval, his horse, and the pilot. They issued forth of the ship and went by the side of the sea toward the castle, and therein were the fairest halls and the fairest mansions that any might see ever. He looketh underneath a tree that was tall and broad and seeth the fairest fountain and the clearest that any may devise, and it was all surrounded of rich pillars, and the gravel thereof seemed to be gold and precious stones. Above this fountain were two men sitting, their beards and hair whiter than driven snow, albeit they seemed young of visage. So soon as they saw Perceval they dressed them to meet him, and bowed down and worshiped the shield that he bare at his neck, and kissed the cross and then the boss wherein were the hallows. "Sir," say they, "Marvel not of this that we do, for well knew we the knight that bare this shield tofore you. Many a time we saw him or ever God were crucified." Perceval marvel-eth much of this that they say, for they talk of a time that is long ago.

"Lords, know ye then how he was named?" Say they, "Joseph of Abarmacie, but no cross was there on the shield before the death of Jesus Christ. But he had it set thereon after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ for the sake of the Saviour that he loved so well." Perceval took off the shield from his neck, and one of the worshipful men setteth upon it as it were a posy of herbs that was blooming with the fairest flowers in the world. Perceval looketh beyond the fountain and seeth in a right fair place a round vessel like as it were ivory, and it was so large that there was a knight within, all armed. He looketh thereinto and seeth the knight, and speaketh unto him many times, but never the more willeth the knight to answer him. Perceval looketh at him in wonderment, and cometh back to the good men and asketh them who is this knight, and they tell him that he may know not as yet. They lead him to a great hall and bear his shield before him, whereof they make right great joy, and show thereunto great worship. He seeth the hall right rich, for hall so rich and so fair had he seen never. It was hung about with right rich cloths of silk, and in the midst of the hall was imaged the Saviour of the World so as He is in His majesty, with the apostles about Him, and within were great galleries that were full of folk and seemed to be of great holiness, and so were they, for had they not been good men they might not there have remained.

"Sir," say the two Masters to Perceval, "This house that you see here so rich, is the hall royal." "By my faith," saith Perceval, "So ought it well to be, for never saw I none so much of worth." He looketh all around, and seeth the richest tables of gold and ivory that he saw ever. One of the Masters clappeth his hands thrice, and three and thirty men come into the hall all in a company.

They were clad in white garments, and not one of them but had a red cross in the midst of his breast, and they seemed to be all of an age. As soon as they enter into the hall they do worship to God Our Lord and set out their cups. Then went they to wash at a great laver of gold, and then went to sit at the tables. The Masters made Perceval sit at the most master-table with themselves. They were served thereat right gloriously, and Perceval looked about him more gladlier than he ate.

And while he was thus looking, he seeth a chain of gold come down above him loaded with precious stones, and in the midst thereof was a crown of gold. The chain descended a great length and held on to nought save to the will of Our Lord only. As soon as the Masters saw it descending they opened a great wide pit that was in the midst of the hall, so that one could see the hole all openly. As soon as the entrance of this pit was discovered, there issued thence the greatest cry and most dolorous that any heard ever, and when the worshipful men hear it, they stretched out their hands towards Our Lord and all began to weep. Perceval heareth this dolor, and marveleth much what it may be. He seeth that the chain of gold descendeth thither and is there stayed until they have well-nigh eaten, and then draweth itself again into the air and so goeth again aloft. But Perceval knoweth not what became thereof, and the Master covereth the pit again, that was right grisly to see, and pitiful to hear were the voices that issued therefrom.

The Good Men rose from the tables when they had eaten, and gave thanks right sweetly to Our Lord; and then returned thither whence they had come. "Sir," saith the Master to Perceval, "the chain of gold that you have seen is right precious and the crown of gold likewise. But never may you issue forth from hence save you promise to return so soon as you shall see the ship and the sail crossed of a red cross; otherwise may you not depart hence." "Tell me," saith he, "of the chain of gold and the crown, what it may be?" "We will tell you not," saith one of the Masters, "save you promise that which I tell you." "Certes, Sir," saith Perceval, "I promise you faithfully, that so soon as I shall have done that I have to do for my lady my mother and one other, that I will return hither, I so be on live and I see your ship so marked as you say." "Yea, be you faithful to the end herein, and you shall have the crown of gold upon your head so soon as you return, and so shall you be seated in the throne, and shall be king of an island that is near to this, right plenteous of all things good, for nought is there in the world that is there lacking that is needful for man's body. King Hermit was the king thereof that thus hath garnished it, and for that he approved himself so well in this kingdom, and that they who are in the island consented thereto, is he chosen to be king of a greater realm. Now they desire that another worshipful man be sent them for king, that shall do for them as much good as did he, but take you good heed, sith that you will be king therein, that the island be well garnished; for, and you garnish it not well, you will be put into the Poverty-stricken Island, the crying

whereof you have but now since heard, and the crown thereof will again be reft from you. For they that have been kings of the Plenteous Island and have not well approved them, are among the folk that you saw in the Poverty-stricken Island, lacking in all things good. And so I tell you that King Hermit, whom you will succeed, hath sent thither a great part of his folk. There are the heads sealed in silver, and the heads sealed in lead, and the bodies whereunto these heads belonged; I tell you that you must make come thither the head both of the King and of the Queen. But of the other I tell you that they are in the Poverty-stricken Island. But we know not whether they shall ever issue forth thence."

"Sir," saith Perceval, "Tell me of the knight that is all armed in the ivory vessel, who he is, and what is the name of this castle?" "You may not know," saith the Master, "until your return. But tell me tidings of the most Holy Graal, that you reconquered, is it still in the holy chapel that was King Fisherman's?" "Yea, Sir," saith Perceval, "and the sword wherewith S. John was beheaded, and other hallows in great plenty." "I saw the Graal," saith the Master, "or ever Joseph, that was uncle to King Fisherman, collected therein the blood of Jesus Christ. Know that well am I acquainted with all your lineage, and of what folk you were born. For your good knighthood and for your good cleanness and for your good valor came you in hither, for such was Our Lord's will, and take heed that you be ready when place shall be, and time shall come, and you shall see the ship appareled." "Sir," saith Perceval, "Most willingly shall I return, nor never would I have sought to depart but for my lady my mother, and for my sister, for never have I seen no place that so much hath pleased me." He was right well harbored the night within, and in the morning, or ever he departed, heard a holy mass in a holy chapel the fairest that he had seen ever. The Master cometh to him after the mass and bringeth him a shield as white as snow. Afterwards, he saith, "You will leave me your shield within for token of your coming and will bear this." "Sir," saith Perceval, "I will do your pleasure." He hath taken leave, and so departeth from the rich mansion, and findeth the ship all appareled, and heareth sound the bells at his forth-going the same as at his coming. He entereth into the ship and the sail is set. He leaveth the land far behind, and the pilot steereth the ship and Our Lord God guideth and leadeth him. The ship runneth a great speed, for far enough had she to run, but God made her speed as He would, for He knew the passing great goodness and worth of the knight that was within.

From 'The High History of the Holy Graal,' by Sebastian Evans

## FROM 'GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT'

## GAWAIN AT THE GREEN CHAPEL

**H**E spurreth Gringalet, and down the path doth ride,  
 Close 'neath a shelving bank, a grove was at his side;  
 He rides the rough road through, right down into the dale,  
 Then draweth rein awhile, full wild he deemed that vale;  
 No sign of dwelling-place he seeth anywhere,  
 On either side the banks rise steeply, bleak and bare,  
 And rough and rugged rocks, with many a stony peak,  
 That shuddering shadows cast — the place was ill to seek.  
 Gawain, he stayed his steed, and cast his glance around,  
 And changed full oft his cheer, ere he that chapel found.  
 Nor here 'twas seen, nor there, right strange the chance he thought;  
 But soon, upon a lawn, a lawe his eye hath caught,  
 A smooth hill by a bank, set close beside a burn,  
 Where by a ford, the flood, forking, aside doth turn,  
 E'en as they boiled, within, bubbling, the waters spring —  
 The knight, he turned the rein, his horse to halt doth bring,  
 At the lawe lights adown, and to a linden bough  
 The rein, and his good steed, he maketh fast enow.  
 Then hies him to the hill, and, walking round about,  
 He cons what it might be, thereof was he in doubt.  
 A hole was at the end, and one on either side,  
 And all with grass o'ergrown, in clumps its form that hide,  
 'T was hollow all within, e'en as a cavern old,  
 Or crevice of a crag — nor might its use be told

right well —

“ Good Lord,” quoth the good knight,

“ Be this the Green Chapel?

The devil at midnight

Might here his matins tell! ”

“ I wis,” so quoth Gawain, “ that wizardry be here,  
 'Twere ill for prayer this place, o'ergrown with grasses sere,  
 'Twere fitting, did that wight who wraps himself in green  
 Do his devotions here in devil's wise, I ween!  
 By my five wits I feel 'tis the foul fiend, in truth,  
 Who here hath given me tryst, my life he seeks, forsooth!  
 A chapel of mischance, ill fortune may it win,  
 'Tis the most cursèd kirk I e'er set foot within! ”

His helmet on his head, his lance gripped fast in hand,  
 He nighs the rock wherein the dwelling rough doth stand;  
 Then, from the hill on high, as 'twere from out a rock,  
 On bank beyond the brook, a noise his senses shock;  
 It clatters through the cliffs, as they would cleave in twain,  
 As one to sharpen scythe on grinding-stone were fain.  
 Lo! it doth whet and whirl as water through a mill,  
 Lo! it doth rush and ring — to hear it was right ill!  
 Then, "By God," quoth Gawain, "I trow that weapon sheer  
 They sharpen for that knight who bade me meet him here  
 this stound,

Let God work as He will,  
 No help elsewhere were found;  
 Though life be forfeit, still  
 I blench not for a sound."

With that the goodly knight, he called with voice so bold,  
 "Who waiteth in this place a tryst with me to hold?  
 For here is Gawain come, here hath he found his way,  
 If any wight will win aught, let him come today,  
 Or now, or never, so his need be fitly sped — "  
 A voice spake from the bank, on high, above his head,  
 "Stay, and I swift will give that which I promised thee — "  
 Awhile the clamor rang, still rushing rapidly,  
 The whetstone whirled awhile, ere he his foe might see,  
 And then, beneath a crag, forth from a cave he sprung,  
 And, coming from that hole, a weapon round him swung,  
 A Danish axe, new dight, wherewith the blow to deal,  
 Bound to the handle fast was the bright blade of steel,  
 Four foot long, fitly filed, no less, that blade of might,  
 And all was wrapped and bound with lace that gleamed full bright;  
 E'en as before was he in gear of green, that knight —  
 Green was he face and foot, his hair, his beard's full flow,  
 But this time on the ground that knight afoot doth go,  
 Stalking, he held the axe, steel downward, at his side,  
 Thus to the water wins, and takes it in his stride.  
 He wades not, with his axe he leaps that water's flow,  
 And fierce, and bold, bestrides the bent, all white with snow  
 that day —

Sir Gawain met the knight,  
 No greeting did he pay,  
 The other quoth: "Aright  
 Hast thou kept tryst today! "

"Gawain," quoth the Green Knight, "now may God give thee grace,  
 Welcome art thou, I wis, to this, my dwelling-place;  
 Thy travel hast thou timed e'en as true man should do —  
 Thou know'st the forward fast we sware betwixt us two;  
 This day, a twelvemonth past, thy share thereof didst take,  
 And I, at this New Year, should fitting answer make.  
 Here in this dale alone, I trow, we be today,  
 To deal as likes us best, with none to say us nay;  
 Now doff thy helm from head, thy payment forthwith take,  
 And with no more debate than I with thee did make  
 When thou whipped off my head, with but one sweeping blow —"  
 "Nay, by God," quoth Gawain, "to whom my life I owe,  
 Nor greet will I, nor groan, for grief that may befall,  
 Deal, an thou wilt, the stroke, still will I stand, withal,  
 Nor bandy words with thee, nor e'er for mercy call —"

Straight there

He bent adown his head,  
 And shewed his neck all bare,  
 No sign he gave of dread,  
 But made as free from care.

Then swift the knight in green made ready for the fray,  
 And gripped his grim tool fast, as fain Gawain to slay,  
 With all his body's force the axe aloft he bare,  
 A mighty feint he made to deal a death-blow there,  
 Yea, had he driven adown in wise as he made show  
 That valiant knight had died beneath the deadly blow.  
 But as the gisarme fell Gawain, he swerved aside  
 E'en as, with fell intent, it did toward him glide;  
 His shoulders shrank before the sharply gleaming blade,  
 The other, as he flinched, the axe from falling stayed —  
 He doth reprove that prince in proud and scornful mood:  
 "Thou art not that Gawain whom men aye deem so good,  
 Who never waxed afraid, by mountain, or by vale,  
 Now, ere thou feelest hurt, for fear thine heart doth fail —  
 Such cowardice in such knight I never thought to know —  
 I never flinched nor fled, when thou didst aim thy blow,  
 I made no parleying there, within King Arthur's hall,  
 My head rolled to my feet, I shewed no fear withal;  
 And thou, ere harm be done, full sore afraid dost seem —  
 Henceforward, of us twain the braver men shall deem  
me aye —"

"I shrank once," quoth Gawain,  
 "Henceforward thy stroke I'll stay,  
 Though none may set again  
 The head that falls today!"

"But haste thee, man, i' faith, thy task to end to bring,  
 Deal me my destiny, make no more dallying,  
 For I will stand thy stroke, and start no more, I trow,  
 Till thine axe hitteth me — my word be gage enow!"  
 "Have at thee!" quoth the knight, and with his axe made play  
 With wrathful mien and grim, as mad he were alway.  
 He struck a mighty blow, yet never wound he dealt,  
 The axe, his hand withheld, ere Gawain harm had felt.  
 The knight that stroke abode, nor flinched, that hero free,  
 But stood still as a stone, or stump of ancient tree  
 That rooted in the ground with hundred roots hath been —  
 Right gaily then quoth he, the giant garbed in green,  
 "So, now thine heart is whole, the stroke I'll deal this tide,  
 Thine hood, that Arthur gave, I prithee hold aside,  
 And keep thy neck thus bent, that naught may o'er it fall —"  
 Gawain was greatly wroth, and grimly spake withal:  
 "Why talk on thus, Sir Knight? o'erlong thy threats so bold,  
 I trow me in thine heart misgivings thou dost hold!"  
 "Forsooth," quoth the Green Knight, "since fierce thy speech alway  
 I will no longer let thine errand wait its pay  
but strike —"

He frowned with lip and brow,  
 Made feint as he would strike  
 Who hopes no aid, I trow,  
 May well such pass mislike.

Lightly he lifts the axe, and lo! it falleth fair,  
 The sharp blade somewhat bit into the neck so bare;  
 But, though he swiftly struck, he hurt him no whit more  
 Save only on that side where through the skin it shore;  
 E'en to the flesh, I trow, it cut, the blade so good,  
 And o'er his shoulders ran to earth the crimson blood.  
 Sir Gawain saw his blood gleam red on the white snow  
 And swift he sprang aside, more than a spear-length's throw;  
 With speed his helmet good upon his head set fast,  
 His trusty shield and true, he o'er his shoulders cast,  
 Drew forth his brand so bright, and fiercely spake alway  
 (I trow that in this world he ne'er was half so gay

Since first, from mother's womb he saw the light of day):

"Now man, withhold thy blow, and proffer me no more,  
A stroke here from thy hand without dispute I bore,  
Would'st thou another give, that same I'll here repay,  
Give these as good again, thereto have tryst today,  
and now —

But one stroke to me falls,  
So ran the oath, I trow,  
We sware in Arthur's halls,  
And therefore guard thee now!"

The Green Knight drew aback, and on his axe did lean,  
Setting the shaft to ground, upon the blade so keen,  
He looked upon the knight awhile, there, on the land,  
Doughty, and void of dread, dauntless doth Gawain stand,  
All armed for strife — at heart it pleased him mightily,  
Then, with voice loud and clear he speaketh merrily,  
Hailing aloud the knight, gaily to him doth say:  
"Bold Sir, upon this bent be not so stern today,  
For none, discourteous, here methinks mishandled thee,  
Nor will, save e'en as framed at court in forward free;  
I promised thee a stroke, thou hast it at this same,  
With that be thou content, I make no further claim.  
An such had been my will, a buffet, verily,  
Rougher I might have dealt, and so done worse to thee.  
First, a menace I made with but a feignèd blow,  
And harmed thee ne'er a whit; that, I would have thee know,  
Was for the forward fast we made in that first night  
When thou didst swear me troth, and kept that troth aright,  
Thou gav'st me all thy gain, e'en as good knight and true —  
Thus for the morrow's morn another feint was due,  
Didst kiss my gentle wife, and kisses gave again —  
For these two from mine axe two blows I did but feign  
this stead —

To true man payment true,  
Of that may none have dread,  
Then, didst withhold my due,  
Therefore thy blood I shed."

"'Tis my weed thou dost wear, that self-same lace of green,  
'Twas woven by my wife, I know it well, I ween,  
Thy kisses all I know, thy ways, thy virtues all,  
The wooing of my wife, 'twas I who willed it all;

I bade her test thy truth — By God who gave me birth  
 Thou art the truest knight that ever trode this earth!  
 As one a pearl doth prize, measured 'gainst pease, though white,  
 So do I hold Gawain above all other knight! ”

The above selection from 'Romance, Vision and Satire' by Jessie L. Weston is used by permission of, and arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company

## SIR THOMAS MALORY

### GALAHAD AT THE GRAIL CASTLE AND AT SARRAS

SO departed he from thence, and commended the brethren to God; and so he rode five days till that he came to the Maimed King. And ever followed Percivale the five days, asking where he had been; and so one told him how the adventures of Logris were enchieved. So on a day it befell that they came out of a great forest, and there they met at traverse with Sir Bors, the which rode alone. It is none need to tell if they were glad; and them he saluted, and they yielded him honor and good adventure, and everych told other. Then said Bors: It is more than a year and a half that I ne lay ten times where men dwelled, but in wild forests and in mountains, but God was ever my comfort.

Then rode they a great while till that they came to the castle of Carbonek. And when they were entered within the castle King Pelles knew them; then there was great joy, for they wist well by their coming that they had fulfilled the quest of the Sangreal. Then Eliazar, King Pelles' son, brought to-fore them the broken sword wherewith Joseph was stricken through the thigh. Then Bors set his hand thereto, if that he might have soldered it again; but it would not be. Then he took it to Percivale, but he had no more power thereto than he. Now have ye it again, said Percivale to Galahad, for an it be ever enchieved by any bodily man ye must do it. And then he took the pieces and set them together, and they seemed that they had never been broken, and as well as it had been first forged. And when they within espied that the adventure of the sword was enchieved, then they gave the sword to Bors, for it might not be better set; for he was a good knight and a worthy man.

And a little afore even the sword arose great and marvelous, and was full of great heat that many men fell for dread. And anon alighted a voice among them, and said: They that ought not to sit at the table of Jesu Christ arise, for now shall very knights be fed. So they went thence, all save King Pelles and Eliazar, his son, the which were holy men, and a maid which was his niece;

and so these three fellows and they three were there, no mo. Anon they saw knights all armed came in at the hall door, and did off their helms and their arms, and said unto Galahad: Sir, we have hied right much for to be with you at this table where the holy meat shall be departed. Then said he: Ye be welcome, but of whence be ye? So three of them said they were of Gaul, and other three said they were of Ireland, and the other three said they were of Denmark. So as they sat thus there came out a bed of tree, of a chamber, the which four gentlewomen brought; and in the bed lay a good man sick, and a crown of gold upon his head; and there in the midst of the place they set him down, and went again their way. Then he lift up his head, and said: Galahad, Knight, ye be welcome, for much have I desired your coming, for in such pain and in such anguish I have been long. But now I trust to God the term is come that my pain shall be allayed, that I shall pass out of this world so as it was promised me long ago. Therewith a voice said: There be two among you that be not in the quest of the Sangreal, and therefore depart ye.

Then King Pelles and his son departed. And therewithal beseemed them that there came a man, and four angels from heaven, clothed in likeness of a bishop, and had a cross in his hand; and these four angels bare him up in a chair, and set him down before the table of silver whereupon the Sangreal was; and it seemed that he had in midst of his forehead letters the which said: See ye here Joseph, the first bishop of Christendom, the same which Our Lord succored in the city of Sarras in the spiritual place. Then the knights marveled, for that bishop was dead more than three hundred year to-fore. O knights, said he, marvel not, for I was sometime an earthly man. With that they heard the chamber door open, and there they saw angels; and two bare candles of wax, and the third a towel, and the fourth a spear which bled marvelously, that three drops fell within a box which he held with his other hand. And they set the candles upon the table, and the third the towel upon the vessel, and the fourth the holy spear even upright upon the vessel. And then the bishop made semblaunt as though he would have gone to the sacring of the mass. And then he took an ubblie which was made in likeness of bread. And at the lifting up there came a figure in likeness of a child, and the visage was as red and as bright as any fire, and smote himself into the bread, so that they all saw it that the bread was formed of a fleshly man; and then he put it into the Holy Vessel again, and then he did that longed to a priest to do to a mass. And then he went to Galahad and kissed him, and bade him go and kiss his fellows: and so he did anon. Now, said he, servants of Jesu Christ, ye shall be fed afore this table with sweet meats that never knights tasted. And when he had said, he vanished away. And they sat them at the table in a great dread, and made their prayers.

Then looked they and saw a man come out of the Holy Vessel, that had all the signs of the passion of Jesu Christ, bleeding all openly, and said: My knights, and my servants, and my true children, which be come out of deadly

life into spiritual life, I will no longer hide me from you, but ye shall see now a part of my secrets and of my hidden things: now hold and receive the high meat which ye have so much desired. Then took he himself the Holy Vessel and came to Galahad; and he kneeled down, and there he received his Saviour, and after him so received all his fellows; and they thought it so sweet that it was marvelous to tell. Then said he to Galahad: Son, wottest thou what I hold betwixt my hands? Nay, said he, but if ye will tell me. This is, said he, the holy dish wherein I ate the lamb on Sher-Thursday. And now hast thou seen that thou most desired to see, but yet hast thou not seen it so openly as thou shalt see it in the city of Sarras in the spiritual place. Therefore thou must go hence and bear with thee this Holy Vessel; for this night it shall depart from the realm of Logris, that it shall never be seen more here. And wottest thou wherefore? For he is not served nor worshiped to his right by them of this land, for they be turned to evil living; therefore I shall disherit them of the honor which I have done them. And therefore go ye three tomorrow unto the sea, where ye shall find your ship ready, and with you take the sword with the strange girdles, and no more with you but Sir Percivale and Sir Bors. Also I will that ye take with you of the blood of this spear for to anoint the Maimed King, both his legs and all his body, and he shall have his health. Sir, said Galahad, why shall not these other fellows go with us? For this cause: for right as I departed my apostles one here and another there, so I will that ye depart; and two of you shall die in my service, but one of you shall come again and tell tidings. Then gave he them his blessing and vanished away.

And Galahad went anon to the spear which lay upon the table, and touched the blood with his fingers, and came after to the Maimed King and anointed his legs. And therewith he clothed him anon, and start upon his feet out of his bed as an whole man, and thanked Our Lord that He had healed him. And that was not to the worldward, for anon he yielded him to a place of religion of white monks, and was a full holy man. That same night about midnight came a voice among them which said: My sons and not my chief sons, my friends and not my warriors, go ye hence where ye hope best to do and as I bade you. Ah, thanked be Thou, Lord, that Thou wilt vouchsafe to call us, Thy sinners. Now may we well prove that we have not lost our pains. And anon in all haste they took their harness and departed. But the three knights of Gaul, one of them hight Claudine, King Claudas' son, and the other two were great gentlemen. Then prayed Galahad to everych of them, that if they come to King Arthur's court that they should salute my Lord, Sir Launcelot, my father, and all the fellowship of the Round Table; and prayed them if that they came on that part that they should not forget it.

Right so departed Galahad, Percivale and Bors with him; and so they rode three days, and then they came to a rivage, and found the ship whereof the tale speaketh of to-fore. And when they came to the board they found in the

midst the table of silver which they had left with the Maimed King, and the Sangreal which was covered with red samite. Then were they glad to have such things in their fellowship; and so they entered and made great reverence thereto; and Galahad fell in his prayer long time to Our Lord, that at what time he asked, that he should pass out of this world. So much he prayed till a voice said to him: Galahad, thou shalt have thy request; and when thou asketh the death of thy body thou shalt have it, and then shalt thou find the life of the soul. Percivale heard this, and prayed him, of fellowship that was between them, to tell him wherefore he asked such things. That shall I tell you, said Galahad; the other day when we saw a part of the adventures of the Sangreal I was in such a joy of heart, that I trow never man was that was earthly. And therefore I wot well, when my body is dead my soul shall be in great joy to see the blessed Trinity every day, and the majesty of Our Lord, Jesu Christ.

So long were they in the ship that they said to Galahad: Sir, in this bed ought ye to lie, for so saith the scripture. And so he laid him down and slept a great while; and when he awaked he looked afore him and saw the city of Sarras. And as they would have landed they saw the ship wherein Percivale had put his sister in. Truly, said Percivale, in the name of God, well hath my sister holden us covenant. Then took they out of the ship the table of silver, and he took it to Percivale and to Bors, to go to-fore, and Galahad came behind. And right so they went to the city, and at the gate of the city they saw an old man crooked. Then Galahad called him and bade him help to bear this heavy thing. Truly, said the old man, it is ten year ago that I might not go but with crutches. Care thou not, said Galahad, and arise up and shew thy good will. And so he assayed, and found himself as whole as ever he was. Then ran he to the table, and took one part against Galahad. And anon arose there great noise in the city, that a cripple was made whole by knights marvelous that entered into the city.

Then anon after, the three knights went to the water, and brought up into the palace Percivale's sister, and buried her as richly as a king's daughter ought to be. And when the king of the city, which was cleped Estorause, saw the fellowship, he asked them of whence they were, and what thing it was that they had brought upon the table of silver. And they told him the truth of the Sangreal, and the power which that God had sent there. Then the king was a tyrant, and was come of the line of paynims, and took them and put them in prison in a deep hole.

But as soon as they were there Our Lord sent them the Sangreal, through whose grace they were always fulfilled while that they were in prison. So at the year's end it befell that this King Estorause lay sick and felt that he should die. Then he sent for the three knights, and they came afore him; and he cried them mercy of that he had done to them, and they forgave it him goodly; and he died anon. When the king was dead all the city was dismayed,

and wist not who might be their king. Right so as they were in council there came a voice among them, and bade them choose the youngest knight of them three to be their king: For he shall well maintain you and all yours. So they made Galahad king by all the assent of the whole city, and else they would have slain him.

#### THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

Then was King Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men. Now give me my spear, said Arthur unto Sir Lucan, for yonder I have espied the traitor that all this woe hath wrought. Sir, let him be, said Sir Lucan, for he is unhappy; and if ye pass this unhappy day ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Good Lord, remember ye of your night's dream, and what the spirit of Sir Gawain told you this night, yet God of his great goodness hath preserved you hitherto. Therefore, for God's sake, my lord, leave off by this, for blessed be God ye have won the field, for here we be three alive, and with Sir Mordred is none alive; and if ye leave off now this wicked day of destiny is past. Tide me death, betide me life, saith the king, now I see him yonder alone he shall never escape mine hands, for at a better avail shall I never have him. God speed you well, said Sir Bedivere.

Then the king gat his spear in both hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying: Traitor, now is thy death-day come. And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran until him with his drawn sword in his hand. And there King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin of his spear, throughout the body, more than a fathom. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death wound he thrust himself with the might that he had up to the bur of King Arthur's spear. And right so he smote his father Arthur, with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain-pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth; and the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned oft-times. And Sir Lucan the Butler and Sir Bedivere oft-times heaved him up. And so weakly they led him betwixt them both, to a little chapel not far from the seaside. And when the king was there he thought him well eased.

Then heard they people cry in the field. Now go thou, Sir Lucan, said the king, and do me to wit what betokens that noise in the field. So Sir Lucan departed, for he was grievously wounded in many places. And so as he yede, he saw and hearkened by the moonlight, how that pillers and robbers were come into the field, to pill and to rob many a full noble knight of brooches, and beads, of many a good ring, and of many a rich jewel; and who that were

not dead all out, there they slew them for their harness and their riches. When Sir Lucan understood this work, he came to the king as soon as he might, and told him all what he had heard and seen. Therefore by my rede, said Sir Lucan, it is best that we bring you to some town. I would it were so, said the king.

But I may not stand, mine head works so. Ah Sir Launcelot, said King Arthur, this day have I sore missed thee: alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawain me warned in my dream. Then Sir Lucan took up the king the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting the king swooned; and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, that the part of his guts fell out of his body, and therewith the noble knight's heart brast. And when the king awoke, he beheld Sir Lucan, how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his guts lay at his feet. Alas, said the king, this is to me a full heavy sight, to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me, that had more need of help than I. Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me: now Jesu have mercy upon his soul! Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. Leave this mourning and weeping, said the king, for all this will not avail me, for wit thou well an I might live myself the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time hieth fast, said the king. Therefore, said Arthur unto Sir Bedivere, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again.

So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft was all of precious stones; and then he said to himself: If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And so, as soon as he might, he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword in the water. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds. That is untruly said of thee, said the king, therefore go thou lightly again, and do my commandment; as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in. Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and so eft he hid the sword, and returned again, and told the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wap and waves wan. Ah, traitor untrue, said King Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that, thou that hast been to me so lief and dear? and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the richness of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee,

I shall slay thee with mine own hands; for thou wouldst for my rich sword see me dead.

Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side; and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might; and there came an arm and an hand above the water and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hove a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. Now put me into the barge, said the king. And so he did softly; and there received him three queens with great mourning; and so they set them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head. And then that queen said: Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? alas, this wound on your head hath caught overmuch cold. And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried: Ah my lord Arthur, what shall become of me, now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies? Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in; for I will into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound, and if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest; and so he went all that night.

## LATIN HYMNS

THE practice of singing hymns has been traced by scholars to pre-Christian times. In the earliest portions of the Bible, in fact, we have records of songs that were sung on occasion, such as Miriam's song of joy after the hosts of Pharaoh had perished in the sea. The Psalms had for their chief end the praise of God in song in a public place. This function of the Psalms seems to have been well known in the Middle Ages. There is an illustrated medieval manuscript in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England, that contains a beautiful picture of David, harp in hand, kneeling in an open court in song before the Lord. In composing hymns, the poets of early Christian times were fully aware that they were following Biblical warrant.

In the primitive church there were eight songs in common use, the Gloria Patri, the Gloria in Excelsis, the Ter Sanctus, the Alleluia, the Nunc Dimittis (an evening hymn), the Benedicite, the Magnificat, and the Te Deum. These songs were exceedingly simple in structure, consisting for the most part of only a sentence or two. The Gloria Patri is the well-known doxology in use today, "Glory be to the Father," etc.; the Ter Sanctus is the doxology, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth: Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Blessed art thou forever, Amen." The Alleluia consists only of this one word, repeated many times; it means, "Praise the Lord."

Of these songs, the Te Deum is the only one that conforms to the modern idea of a hymn. It has been traditionally ascribed to St. Ambrose, but most scholars consider it Ambrosian; that is, they assign it to the earliest school of sacred Latin poetry without definitely giving it to any one author. Daniel, however, whose work on the medieval Latin hymns places him high in authority, believes that this first hymn was imported from the Greek Church, for he has found several lines in this hymn that are almost identical with lines found in early hymns of that church. Throughout the Middle Ages the belief prevailed that Ambrose and Augustine first sang this hymn of praise together. The Te Deum has always been popular with the church. The Rule of St. Benedict directed that it should be sung after the fourth response. It was always used at Matins as well as at other important services. The hymn is among the best of the Latin hymns, and may well stand at the head as probably the earliest of the hymns; the dignity of the opening lines, especially in the original Latin, has seldom been excelled by any of the later hymns. They may be translated, "We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord."

Hilarius, bishop and saint, is the earliest acknowledged writer of hymns. He was born of pagan parents, who gave him such an excellent classical education that St. Jerome said of him, "He culled the flowers of Grecian science." About the year 350, he and his family, including his wife and daughter, renounced the pagan religion and became Christians. He was soon made bishop, and became so active against the Arian heresy that his enemies found it convenient to accuse him of immorality. From Greece, where he lived in banishment for two years, he sent a letter to his daughter, in which he says that he is inclosing two hymns, one for morning worship, the other for evening. The morning hymn was the *Lucis Largitor Splendide*; the evening hymn is not so easily identified; it probably is not extant. Hilarius wrote also a book of hymns which has been entirely lost. We have, however, four hymns that can be confidently ascribed to him; of these, three are morning hymns, and one for Whitsunday. The following translation <sup>1</sup> of his famous hymn, the *Lucis Largitor Splendide*, does not adequately represent the dignity of the original, but it gives a fair idea of its other qualities.

Thou splendid giver of the light,  
By whose serene and lovely ray  
Beyond the gloomy shades of night  
Is opened wide another day!

Thou true Light-bearer of the earth,  
Far more than he whose slender star,  
Son of the morning, in its dearth  
Of radiance sheds its beams afar!

But clearer than the sun may shine,  
All light and day in thee I find,  
To fill my night with glory fine  
And purify my inner mind.

Come near, thou maker of the world,  
Illustrious in thy Father's light,  
From whose free grace if we were hurled,  
Body and soul were ruined quite.

Fill with thy Spirit every sense,  
That God's divine and gracious love  
May drive Satanic temptings hence,  
And blight their falsehoods from above.

<sup>1</sup> The translations of hymns used in this article are those made by S. W. Duffield in his 'Latin Hymn-Writers and Their Hymns,' New York, 1889.

That in the acts of common toil  
Which life demands from us each day,  
We may, without a stain or soil,  
Live in thy holy laws always.

Let chastity of mind prevail  
To conquer every fleshly lust;  
And keep thy temple without fail,  
O Holy Ghost, from filth and dust.

This hope is in my praying heart —  
These are my vows which now I pay:  
That this sweet light may not depart,  
But guide me purely through the day.

Perhaps the most noticeable quality of this hymn is its simplicity. There are no unusual words or involved sentences; nor are the ideas expressed abstract or vague. The statements are such that a child may understand them, and yet as he grows older will read fresh depth and new meaning into them. And this is an essential quality in great poetry — that it should appear simple, and yet take on new depth with the growth of the reader. In its simplicity the hymn emphasizes the "acts of common toil." It is concerned with daily life as lived by the humble Christians. In his simple sincerity, the author prays for protection, guidance, and help to do the tasks "which life demands from us each day." In this connection it should also be observed that the development of thought in the hymn is typical of the Christian hymns for a thousand years to come: there are two chief ideas, one of praise for the great Lord of the world, and the other, a prayer for guidance. These two ideas constitute the thought content of most hymns, even to this day.

Close adherence to the Bible is typical of this hymn as it is of all the early hymns. Its theme is taken directly from the Gospel of St. John, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." The selection of a text, and developing around it ideas appropriate to the time and place, and thus making one unity of idea, is thoroughly characteristic of the Latin hymns. The relation of the hymn to the Psalms is also suggestive. Critics have sometimes declared that the sacred poetry of the Anglo-Saxons is peculiar in that it abounds in attributes of power and splendor to God, but these Latin hymns, following the example of the Psalms, also make constant mention of the might and glory of God as the Founder and Ruler of the world. Interesting too is this early comparison of God to light, a figure that is present constantly in Latin Christian poetry, and which was to find its great development many centuries later in the epic of 'Paradise Lost.' In this hymn, the poet in a typical fashion

mentions first the light of daybreak, then that great dawn, the true light to men's souls. At length comes the irresistible comparison: —

*Sed toto sole clarior,  
Lux ipse totus et dies.*

But thou art clearer than the sun,  
The light itself and complete day.

One other example may be given of the hymns of Hilarius; this also is a morning hymn: —

The limit of the night is passed,  
The quiet hour of sleep has fled;  
Far up the lance of dawn is cast;  
New light upon the heaven is spread.

But when this sparkle of the day  
Our eyes discern, then, Lord of light,  
To thee our souls make haste to pray  
And offer all their wants aright.

O Holy Spirit, by the deeds  
Of thine own light and charity,  
Renew us through our earthly needs  
And cause us to be like to thee.

Grant this, O Father ever blessed;  
And Holy Son, our friendly friend;  
And Holy Ghost, thou comfort best!  
Now and until all time shall end.

The rugged simplicity of the hymns of Hilarius undoubtedly influenced the large number of hymns that were collected under the name of Ambrose. In fact, so simple are the Ambrosian hymns that some scholars have found them cold. It is true that these hymns seldom show much emotion in the development of the thought. They betray little subjectivity on the part of the writers; even less than the hymns given above do they reveal any personal feeling; they have little of the medieval splendor of word, rhythm, or idea; in them there is no mystic feeling, no glowing warmth or inspiring enthusiasm; yet there is a simplicity, a deep earnestness, and a reserve force that count for true worth. There are few ornaments, but it is because the men who wrote these songs felt no need for them.

Prudentius was the next outstanding Christian poet. In him we first feel the distinct glow of personality. One of his best known hymns is the *Ales Dei Nuntius*: —

The bird, the messenger of day,  
Cries the approaching light;  
And thus doth Christ, who calleth us  
Our minds to life excite.

Bear off, he cries, these beds of ease  
Where lie the sick and dumb;  
And let the chaste and pure and true  
Watch, for I quickly come.

We haste to Jesus at his word,  
Earnest to pray and weep,  
Such fervent supplication still  
Forbids pure hearts to sleep.

Disturb our dream, thou holy Christ,  
Break off the night's dark chain;  
Forgive us all our sin of old,  
And grant us light again.

That Prudentius was a poet with imagination as well as devotion is seen in the way he presents the idea of the Transfigured Lord in his hymn, *Quicumque Christum Quaeritis*: —

O ye who seek your Lord today  
Lift up your eyes on high,  
And view him there, as now ye may,  
Whose brightness cannot die.

How gloriously it shineth on,  
As though it knew no dearth,  
Sublime and lofty, never done,  
Older than heaven and earth.

Thou art the very King of men,  
Thy people Israel's King,  
Promised unto our fathers when  
From Abraham all should spring.

To thee the prophets testified,  
 In thee their hearts rejoice —  
 Our Father bids us seek thy side  
 To hear and heed thy voice.

Another hymn by Prudentius, the *Nox et Tenebrae et Nubila*, may be given; it is used in the Catholic liturgy today.

Night, clouds, and darkness, get you gone!  
 Depart, confusions of the earth!  
 Light comes; the sky so dark and wan  
 Brightens — it is the Saviour's birth!

The gloom of earth is cleft in twain,  
 Struck by that sudden, solar ray;  
 Color and life return again  
 Before the shining face of day.

Thee, Christ, alone we seek to know,  
 Thee, pure in mind, and plain in speech;  
 We seek thee in our worship, so  
 That thou canst through our senses teach.

How many are the dreams of dread  
 Which by thy light are swept apart!  
 Thou, Saviour of the sainted dead,  
 Shine with calm luster in the heart!

Prudentius stood between two schools of Latin poetry; classical Latin poetry, upon which the early hymns had been modeled, was losing its hold upon the poets; accent was becoming more important and quantity was almost disappearing. But rhyme had not yet established itself. Prudentius had not the genius to foresee the importance that rhyme in poetry was later to assume — to expect him to have done so, would be to ask too much. No one could have foretold that what seemed to the staid poets trivial and quite flippant should become with passing time the accepted manner in which to write hymns. He could not put new life into the ancient forms, and yet he was too much of a poet to be contented with writing in the old Ambrosian manner, which had now become trite. As a result he did what was natural, he tried to get novelty by adding extravagances, ornament, and considerable verbiage. Prudentius, though he used many meters, some seventeen in all, and in other ways sought the unusual, often wrote with vigor. Scholars have not always

agreed upon his excellencies. The eighteenth-century English scholar, Bentley, declared that he was the "Horace and Vergil of the Christians." It is true that Latin to him was a flexible medium for the expression of his thought, and that he was always in earnest.

Fortunatus, born in 530, was the writer of several hymns. He had led a worldly life of pleasure until, influenced by Queen Rhadegunda, he became a priest. His sacred poetry is not marked by an especially high degree of sincerity, nor is its Latinity good, yet in his best poetry there appears a vigor that distinguishes him. The following hymn, written for the reception of the relics of Gregory of Tours and of Rhadegunda, shows this quality.

The royal banners forward fly;  
The cross upon them cheers the sky;  
That cross whereon our Maker hung,  
In human form, by anguish wrung.

For he was wounded bitterly  
By that dread spear-thrust on the tree,  
And there, to set us free from guilt,  
His very life in blood he spilt.

Accomplished now is what was told  
By David in his psalm of old,  
Who saith, "The heathen world shall see  
God as their King upon the tree."

O tree, renowned and shining high,  
Thy crimson is a royal dye!  
Elect from such a worthy root  
To bear those holy limbs, thy fruit. . . .

O cross, our only hope, all hail!  
In this the time when woes assail,  
To all the pious grant thy grace,  
And all the sinners' sins efface!

One other writer, Gregory the Great, should be mentioned, not only for the hymns which he is supposed to have written, but also for the influence which he exerted on the music of the whole body of hymns. Gregory was one of the few doctors of the medieval Church, and assuredly one of her greatest men. His fame, indeed, rests rather upon his acts as Pope than upon the hymns that he is credited with. He brought about a revision of the old hymns, caused

the music to be modified, and introduced new hymns and new tunes. He was himself passionately fond of song, and founded one of the first schools of music. With the Gregorian Antiphonary came a new era in church music. The songs and melodies of the Ambrosian school, which had been used in the Church for two centuries or more, were of a simple nature. The music was melodious and natural; the words, as we have seen, were equally simple and direct. Gregory, the reformer, the thinker, the enhancer of the Church's importance, conceived different ideas of the dignity of church song. He had before him a vision of what the Church in the future might become, and he felt that consonant with the developing greatness of the Church should be a grander music, singing more adequately the praises of the Creator and the emotions of men. The influence of Gregory told for greater dignity of expression, both in words and in music; the words tended to become graver, the emotion grander and nearer the sublime; the music, severe in its monotonies, suggested stateliness and pomp. What happened later in church architecture was now taking place in church song: the Church was assuming increased splendor in its outward functions. The book of Gregorian chants was one of the earliest evidences of this new development.

These qualities are illustrated in the famous hymn, *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, usually credited to Gregory, though it may have been written by some one closely associated with him.

O Holy Ghost, Creator, come!  
 Thy people's minds pervade;  
 And fill with thy supernal grace  
 The souls which thou hast made.

Thou who art called the Paraclete,  
 The gift of God most high;  
 Thou living fount, and fire and love,  
 Our spirit's pure ally;

Thou sevenfold Giver of all good;  
 Finger of God's right hand;  
 Thou promise of the Father, rich  
 In words for every land;

Kindle our senses to a flame,  
 And fill our hearts with love,  
 And through our bodies' weakness, still  
 Pour valor from above!

Drive farther off our enemy,  
And straightway give us peace;  
That, with thyself as such a guide,  
We may from evil cease.

Through thee may we the Father know,  
And thus confess the Son;  
For thee (from both the Holy Ghost)  
We praise while time shall run.

The hymns by known authors thus far mentioned influenced succeeding hymnology at least until the eleventh century. Exactly when rhyme became prevalent in the hymns is a matter of conjecture. The year 1000 may be taken as a convenient and fairly accurate date for the beginning of the widespread use of rhyme in church song. From that time to the end of the Middle Ages, hymns were written in great abundance. It has been estimated that 50,000 of these anonymous hymns have been published, and that 25,000 still remain in manuscript.

These anonymous hymns readily fall into natural classes. There are the morning hymns, in which the protective care of God throughout the night is celebrated; and the evening hymns which pray for protection during the night. Then there are special hymns composed for each of the seven services of the day. There were hymns written for special services, such as the "Hours of the Cross." The rise of the worship of the Virgin Mary during the Middle Ages brought forth many beautiful hymns and songs addressed to her. The saints' days, and every event celebrated in the liturgy and by the Church, required their own special hymns. Among these hymns should be mentioned the Christmas songs. They were usually written in a simple meter, often only two lines in a stanza. An idea of their attractiveness may be gained from the following translation by A. R. Thompson: —

The child in Bethlehem is born,  
Hail, O Jerusalem, the morn!

Here lies he in the cattle-stall  
Whose kingdom boundless is withal.

The ox and ass do recognize  
This Child, their Master from the skies.

Kings from the East are journeying,  
Gold, frankincense, and myrrh they bring.

Who, entering in turn the place,  
The new King greet with lowly grace.

Seed of the woman lies he there,  
And no man's son, this Child so fair.

Unwounded by the serpent's sting,  
Of our own blood comes in the King.

Like us in mortal flesh is he,  
Unlike us in his purity.

That so he might restore us men  
Like to himself and God again.

Wherefore, on this his natal day,  
Glad, to our Lord, we homage pay.

We praise the Holy Trinity,  
And render thanks, O God, to thee!

The hymns that were used by the Church in times of affliction, penance, and on the occasion of death, form another large group. Interesting to us is the short poem that Mary, Queen of Scots, is said to have composed before her execution: —

O Lord God, I have hope in thee!  
O my dear Jesus, now deliver me!  
In these hard chains, in miserable punishment,  
I desire thee!  
In languishing, in groaning, and upon bended knee,  
I adore thee!  
I implore thee that thou shouldst free me!

More typical, because it was almost universally used, was the sequence of the medieval writer, Notker, which later was incorporated into the services for the dead: —

In the midst of life we are in death;  
Whom should we seek as a helper except thee, O Lord?  
Who art justly angry because of our sins.  
Holy God, Holy strong One,  
Holy and merciful Saviour,  
Hand us not over to the bitterness of death.

Most famous of all is the *Dies Irae*, *Dies Illa*, which is here given as translated by the Earl of Roscommon in the late seventeenth century: —

The day of wrath, that dreadful day,  
Shall the whole world in ashes lay,  
As David and the Sibyls say.

What horror will invade the mind  
When the strict Judge, who would be kind,  
Shall have few venial faults to find!

The last loud trumpet's wondrous sound,  
Shall through the rending tombs rebound,  
And wake the nations under ground.

Nature and Death shall with surprise,  
Behold the pale offender rise,  
And view the Judge with conscious eyes.

Then shall, with universal dread,  
The sacred mystic book be read,  
To try the living and the dead.

The Judge ascends his awful throne,  
He makes each secret sin be known,  
And all with shame confess their own.

O then, what interest shall I make,  
To save my last important stake,  
When the most just have cause to quake?

Thou mighty, formidable King,  
Thou mercy's unexhausted spring,  
Some comfortable pity bring!

Forget not what my ransom cost,  
Nor let my dear-bought soul be lost,  
In storms of guilty terror tost.

Thou who for me didst feel such pain,  
Whose precious blood the cross did stain,  
Let not those agonies be vain.

Thou whom avenging powers obey,  
 Cancel my debt (too great to pay)  
 Before the sad accounting day.

Surrounded with amazing fears,  
 Whose load my soul with anguish bears,  
 I sigh, I weep: accept my tears.

Thou who were mov'd with Mary's grief,  
 And, by absolving of the thief,  
 Hast given me hope, now give relief.

Reject not my unworthy prayer,  
 Preserve me from that dangerous snare  
 Which death and gaping hell prepare.

Give my exalted soul a place  
 Among thy chosen right-hand race;  
 The sons of God, and heirs of grace.

From that insatiable abyss,  
 Where flames devour, and serpents hiss,  
 Promote me to thy seat of bliss.

Prostrate my contrite heart I rend,  
 My God, my Father, and my Friend;  
 Do not forsake me in my end.

Well may they curse their second breath,  
 Who rise to a reviving death;  
 Thou great Creator of Mankind,  
 Let guilty man compassion find!

In the twelfth century the growth of mysticism influenced more or less intimately many of the hymns composed at that time and later. Medieval mysticism received an impetus from the life and teachings of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who died in 1153. It may be briefly defined as an earnest attempt to live so perfectly in accord with the divine will that finally, even in this life, the subject is united with God. The constant theme of the mystic poet is for a closer walk with God. In advancing towards this union with God, the mystic passed through three stages of growth, penitence, purification, and contemplation. Many are the songs, lyrics, and hymns that illustrate characteristics of each of these stages.

The poetry that is illustrative of the earlier steps in this progress is likely to emphasize the exceeding wickedness of sin. There is as well an intense dislike for the earthly part of man's nature. What is man? the mystic often asks, and the answer is inevitable: Like the grass he grows up and is cut down. Again mystic poetry is often subjective. In an age when almost all poetry is objective, it is likely to be personal; it tends to emphasize the individual. Furthermore, in attempting to advance himself in grace, the mystic tried to visualize the sufferings of Christ; in this way his poetry became realistic, as he dwelt upon the crucifixion, the gaping wounds, and the bent head, pierced with thorns. Frequently this attempt at a realistic portraying led to detailed descriptions of Christ, his physical excellencies, his winning grace, his benign countenance. Most of all, mystic poetry is pervaded by a burning love for God, usually expressed by the poet's adoration of Christ or his mother, Mary. It is this thought that Richard Rolle, an English mystic poet, expresses in this stanza: —

Jesus, I covet to love thee,  
And that is wholly my yearning;  
Therefore, to love thee, thou teach me,  
And I thy love shall ever sing.

St. Bernard is supposed to have written the beautiful hymn, *Jesu Dulce Memoria*, which today has a place in the hymnals of most churches. The first stanza of this hymn, freely translated, is typical of this kind of mystic poetry: —

Jesus, the very thought of thee  
With sweetness fills my breast;  
But sweeter far thy face to see,  
And in thy presence rest.

This mystic tendency spread throughout the medieval Church and brought into the sacred poetry of the last three centuries of the Middle Ages the deep devotion that characterized the lives of the writers.

FRANK A. PATTERSON

## FOLK-SONG

**A**S in the case of ballads, or narrative songs, it was important to sunder not only the popular from the artistic, but also the ballad of the people from the ballad for the people; precisely so in the article of communal lyric one must distinguish songs of the folk — songs made by the folk — from those verses of the street or the music hall which are often caught up and sung by the crowd until they pass as genuine folk-song. For true folk-song, as for the genuine ballad, the tests are simplicity, sincerity, mainly oral tradition, and origin in a homogeneous community. The style of such a poem is not only simple, but free from individual stamp; the metaphors, employed sparingly at the best, are like the phrases which constantly occur in narrative ballads, and belong to tradition. The meter is not so uniform as in ballads, but must betray its origin in song. An unsung folk-song is more than a contradiction — it is an impossibility.

The artistic and individual lyric, however sincere it may be, is fairly sure to be blended with reflection; but such a subjective tone is foreign to communal verse — whether narrative or purely lyrical. In other words, to study the lyric of the people, one must banish that notion of individuality, of reflection and sentiment, which one is accustomed to associate with all lyrics. To illustrate the matter, it is evident that Shelley's 'O World, O Life, O Time,' and Wordsworth's 'My Heart Leaps up,' however widely sundered may be the points of view, however varied the character of the emotion, are of the same individual and reflective class. Contrast now with these a third lyric, an English song of the thirteenth century, preserved by some happy chance from the oblivion which claimed most of its fellows; the casual reader would unhesitatingly put it into the same class with Wordsworth's verses as a lyric of "nature," of "joy," or what not — an outburst of simple and natural emotion. But if this 'Cuckoo Song' be regarded critically, it will be seen that precisely those qualities of the individual and the subjective are wanting. The music of it is fairly clamorous; the refrain counts for as much as the verses; while the emotion seems to spring from the crowd and to represent a community. Written down — no one can say when it was actually composed — not later than the middle of the thirteenth century, along with the music and a Latin hymn interlined in red ink, this song is justly regarded by critics as communal rather than artistic in its character; and while it is set to music in what Chappell calls "the earliest secular composition, in parts, known to exist in any country," yet even this elaborate music was probably "a national song and tune, selected according to the custom of the times as a basis for

harmony," and was "not entirely a scholastic composition." It runs in the original: —

Sumer is icumen in.  
 Lhude sing cuccu.  
 Groweth sed  
 And bloweth med  
 And springth the wde nu.  
 Sing cuccu.

Awe bleteth after lomb,  
 Lhouth after calve cu;  
 Bulluc sterteth,  
 Bucke verteth,  
 Murie sing cuccu.  
 Cuccu, cuccu.

Wel singes thu cuccu,  
 Ne swik thu naver nu.

## BURDEN

Sing cuccu nu. Sing cuccu.  
 Sing cuccu. Sing cuccu nu.<sup>1</sup>

The monk, whose passion for music led him to rescue this charming song, probably regretted the rustic quality of the words, and did his best to hide the origin of the air; but behind the complicated music is a tune of the country-side, and if the refrain is here a burden, to be sung throughout the piece by certain voices while others sing the words of the song, we have every right to think of an earlier refrain which almost absorbed the poem and was sung by a dancing multitude. This is a most important consideration. In all parts of Europe, songs for the dance still abound in the shape of a welcome to spring; and a lyrical outburst in praise of the jocund season often occurs by way of prelude to the narrative ballad: witness the beautiful opening of 'Robin Hood and the Monk.' The troubadour of Provence, like the minnesinger of Germany, imitated these invocations to spring. A charming *balada* of Provence probably takes us beyond the troubadour to the domain of actual folk-song.<sup>2</sup> "At the entrance of the bright season," it runs, "in order to begin

<sup>1</sup> "Summer has come in; loudly sing, cuckoo! Grows seed and blossoms mead and springs the wood now. Sing, cuckoo! Ewe bleats after lamb, lows after (its) calf the cow; bullock leaps, buck verts (seeks the green); merrily sing, cuckoo! Cuckoo, cuckoo! Well singest thou, cuckoo; cease thou not never now. *Burden*. — Sing, cuckoo, now; sing, cuckoo! Sing, cuckoo, sing, cuckoo, now." — *Lhude*, *wde* (= *wude*), *awe*, *calve*, *bucke*, are dissyllabic. In the above translation by A. J. Ellis the rendering of *verteth* is very doubtful.

<sup>2</sup> The first stanza in the original will show the structure of this true "ballad" in the

joy and to tease the jealous, the queen will show that she is fain to love. As far as to the sea, no maid nor youth but must join the lusty dance which she devises. On the other hand comes the king to break up the dancing, fearful lest some one will rob him of his April queen. Little, however, cares she for the graybeard; a gay young 'bachelor' is there to pleasure her. Whoso might see her as she dances, swaying her fair body, he could say in sooth that nothing in all the world peers the joyous queen! "Then, as after each stanza, for conclusion the wild refrain — "Away, ye jealous ones, away! Let us dance together, together let us dance!" The interjectional refrain, "eya," a mere cry of joy, is common in French and German songs for the dance, and gives a very echo of the lusty singers. Repetition, refrain, the infectious pace and merriment of this old song, stamp it as a genuine product of the people.<sup>3</sup> The brief but emphatic praise of spring with which it opens is doubtless a survival of those older pagan hymns and songs which greeted the return of summer and were sung by the community in chorus to the dance, now as a religious rite, now merely as the expression of communal rejoicing. What the people once sang in chorus was repeated by the individual poet. Neidhart the German is famous on account of his rustic songs for the dance, which often begin with this lusty welcome to spring; while the dactyls of Walther von der Vogelweide not only echo the cadence of dancing feet, but so nearly exclude the reflective and artistic element that the "I" of the singer counts for little. "Winter," he sings,

Winter has left us no pleasure at all;  
 Leafage and heather have fled with the fall,  
 Bare is the forest and dumb as a thrall;  
 If the girls by the roadside were tossing the ball,  
 I could prick up my ears for the singing-birds' call!<sup>4</sup>

primitive sense of a dance-song. There are five of these stanzas, carrying the same rhymes throughout: —

A l'entrada del temps clar — eya —  
 Per joia recomençar — eya —  
 E per jels irritar — eya —  
 Vol la regina mostrar  
 Qu' el' est si amoroza.

#### Refrain

Alavi', alavia, jels,  
 laissez nos, laissez nos  
 ballar entre nos, entre nos!

<sup>3</sup> Games and songs of children are still to be found which preserve many of the features of these old dance-songs. The dramatic traits met with in the games point back now to the choral poetry of pagan times, when perhaps a bit of myth was enacted, now to the communal dance where the stealing of a bride may have been imitated.

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise credited, translations are by the writer.

That is, "if spring were here, and the girls were going to the village dance"; for ball-playing was not only a rival of the dance, but was often combined with it. Walther's dactyls are one in spirit with the fragments of communal lyric which have been preserved for us by song-loving "clerks" or theological students, those intellectual tramps of the Middle Ages, who often wrote down such a merry song of May and then turned it more or less freely into their barbarous but not unattractive Latin. For example: —

Now is time for holiday!  
 Let our singing greet the May;  
 Flowers in the breezes play,  
 Every holt and heath is gay.

Let us dance and let us spring  
 With merry song and crying!  
 Joy befits the lusty May:  
 Set the ball a-flying!  
 If I woo my lady-love,  
 Will she be denying?

Or the song at the dance may set forth some of the preliminaries, as when a girl is supposed to sing: —

Care and sorrow, fly away!  
 On the green field let us play,  
 Playmates gentle, playmates mine,  
 Where we see the bright flowers shine.  
 I say to thee, I say to thee,  
 Playmate mine, O come with me!

Gracious Love, to me incline,  
 Make for me a garland fine —  
 Garland for the man to wear  
 Who can please a maiden fair.  
 I say to thee, I say to thee,  
 Playmate mine, O come with me!

The greeting from youth to maiden, from maiden to youth, was doubtless a favorite bit of folk-song, whether at the dance or as independent lyric. The variations are endless; one of the earliest is found in a charming Latin tale of the eleventh century, 'Ruodlieb,' "the oldest known romance in European literature." A few German words are mixed with the Latin; while after the good old ballad way the greeting is first given to the messenger, and repeated when the messenger performs his task: "I wish thee as much joy

as there are leaves on the trees — and as much delight as birds have, so much love (*minna*) — and as much honor I wish thee as there are flowers and grass!" Competent critics regard this as a current folk-song of greeting inserted in the romance, and therefore as the oldest example of *Minnesang* in German literature. Of the less known variations of this theme, one may be given from the German of an old song where male singers are supposed to compete for a garland presented by the maidens; the rivals not only sing for the prize but even answer riddles. It is a combination of game and dance, and is evidently of communal origin. The honorable authorities of Freiburg, about 1556, put this practice of "dancing of evenings in the streets, and singing for a garland, and dancing in a throng" under strictest ban. The following is a stanza of greeting in such a song: —

Maiden, thee I fain would greet,  
From thy head unto thy feet.  
As many times I greet thee even  
As there are stars in yonder heaven,  
As there shall blossom flowers gay,  
From Easter to St. Michael's day!

These competitive verses for the dance and the garland were, as we shall presently see, spontaneous: composed in the throng by lad or lassie, they are certainly entitled to the name of communal lyric. Naturally, the greeting could ban as well as bless; and little Kirstin (Christina) in the Danish ballad sends a greeting of double charge: —

To Denmark's King wish as oft good night  
As stars are shining in heaven bright;  
To Denmark's Queen as oft bad year  
As the linden hath leaves or the hind hath hair!

Folk-song in the primitive stage always had a refrain or chorus. The invocation of spring, met in so many songs of later time, is doubtless a survival of an older communal chorus sung to deities of summer and flooding sunshine and fertility. The well-known Latin '*Pervigilium Veneris*,' artistic and elaborate as it is in eulogy of spring and love, owes its refrain and the cadence of its trochaic rhythm to some song of the Roman folk in festival; so that Walter Pater is not far from the truth when he gracefully assumes that the whole poem was suggested by this refrain "caught from the lips of the young men, singing because they could not help it, in the streets of Pisa," during that Indian summer of paganism under the Antonines. This haunting refrain, with its throb of the spring and the festal throng, is ruthlessly tortured into a heroic couplet in Parnell's translation: —

Let those love now who never loved before:  
 Let those who always loved now love the more.

Contrast the original!

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet!*

This is the trochaic rhythm dear to the common people of Rome and the near provinces, who as every one knows spoke a very different speech from the speech of the patrician, and sang their own songs withal; a few specimens of the latter, notably the soldiers' song about Cæsar, have come down to us.<sup>5</sup>

The refrain itself, of whatever meter, was imitated by classical poets like Catullus; and the earliest traditions of Greece tell of these refrains, with gathering verses of lyric or narrative character, sung in the harvest-field and at the dance. In early Assyrian poetry, even, the refrain plays an important part; while an Egyptian folk-song, sung by the reapers, seems to have been little else than a refrain. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, courtly poets took up the refrain, experimented with it, refined it, and so developed those highly artificial forms of verse known as roundel, triolet, and ballade. The refrain, in short, is corner-stone for all poetry of the people, if not of poetry itself; beginning with inarticulate cries of joy or sorrow, like the *eya* noted above, mere emotional utterances or imitations of various sounds, then growing in distinctness and compass, until the separation of choral from artistic poetry, and the increasing importance of the latter, reduced the refrain to a merely ancillary function, and finally did away with it altogether. Many refrains are still used for the dance which are mere exclamations, with just enough coherence of words added to make them pass as poetry. Frequently, as in the French, these have a peculiar beauty. Victor Hugo has imitated them with success; but to render them into English is impossible.

The refrain, moreover, is closely allied to those couplets or quatrains composed spontaneously at the dance or other merry-making of the people. In

<sup>5</sup> We cannot widen our borders so as to include that solitary folk-song rescued from ancient Greek literature, the 'Song of the Swallow,' sung by children of the Island of Rhodes as they went about asking gifts from house to house at the coming of the earliest swallow. The meter is interesting in comparison with the rhythm of later European folk-songs, and there is evident dramatic action. Nor can we include the fragments of communal drama found in the favorite Debates between Summer and Winter—from the actual contest, to such lyrical forms as the song at the end of Shakespeare's 'Love's Labor's Lost.' The reader may be reminded of a good specimen of this class in 'Ivy and Holly,' printed by Ritson, 'Ancient Songs and Ballads,' with the refrain:—

Nay, Ivy, nay,  
 Hyt shal not be, I wys;  
 Let Holy hafe the maystry,  
 As the maner ys.

many parts of Germany, the dances of harvest were until recent days enlivened by the so-called *schnaderhüpfel*, a quatrain sung to a simple air, composed on the spot, and often inclining to the personal and the satiric. In earlier days this power to make a quatrain offhand seems to have been universal among the peasants of Europe. In Scandinavia such quatrains are known as *stev*. They are related, so far as their spontaneity, their universal character, and their origin are concerned, to the *coplas* of Spain, the *stornelli* of Italy, and the distichs of modern Greece. Of course, the specimens of this poetry which can be found now are rude enough; for the life has gone out of it, and to find it at its best one must go back to conditions which brought the undivided genius of the community into play. What one finds nowadays is such motley as this — a so-called *rundâ* from Vogtland, answering to the Bavarian *schnaderhüpfel*: —

I and my Hans,  
We go to the dance;  
And if no one will dance,  
Dance I and my Hans!

A *schnaderhüpfel* taken down at Appenzell in 1754, and one of the oldest known, was sung by some lively girl as she danced at the reapers' festival: —

Mine, mine, mine — O my love is fine,  
And my favor shall he plainly see;  
Till the clock strike eight, till the clock strike nine,  
My door, my door shall open be.

It is evident that the great mass of this poetry died with the occasion that brought it forth, or lingered in oral tradition, exposed to a thousand chances of oblivion. The Church made war upon these songs, partly because of their erotic character, but mainly, one may assume, because of the chain of tradition from heathen times which linked them with feasts in honor of abhorred gods, and with rustic dances at the old pagan harvest-home. A study of all this, however, with material at a minimum, and conjecture or philological combination as the only possible method of investigation, must be relegated to the treatise and the monograph; for present purposes we must confine our exposition and search to songs that shall attract readers as well as students. Yet this can be done only by the admission into our pages of folk-song which already bears witness, more or less, to the touch of an artist working upon material once exclusively communal and popular.

Returning to our English type, the 'Cuckoo Song,' we are now to ask what other communal lyrics with this mark upon them, denoting at once rescue and contamination at the hands of minstrel or wandering clerk, have come down to us from the later Middle Ages. Having answered this question, it will

remain to deal with the difficult material accumulated in comparatively recent times. Ballads are far easier to preserve than songs. Ballads have a narrative; and this story in them has proved antiseptic, defying the chances of oral transmission. A good story travels far, and the path which it wanders from people to people is often easy to follow; but the more volatile contents of the popular lyric — we are not speaking of its tune, which is carried in every direction — are easily lost. Such a lyric lives chiefly by its sentiment, and sentiment is a fragile burden. We can, however, get some notion of this communal song by process of inference, for the earliest lays of the Provençal troubadour, and probably of the German minnesinger, were based upon the older song of the countryside. Again, in England there was little distinction made between the singer who entertained court and castle and the gleeman who sang in the villages and at rural festivals; the latter doubtless taking from the common stock more than he contributed from his own. A certain proof of more aristocratic and distinctly artistic, that is to say, individual origin, and a conclusive reason for refusing the name of folk-song to any one of these lyrics of love, is the fact that it happens to address a married woman. Everyone knows that the troubadour and the minnesinger thus addressed their lays; and only the style and general character of their earliest poetry can be considered as borrowed from the popular muse. In other words, however vivacious, objective, vigorous, may be the early lays of the troubadour, however one is tempted to call them mere modifications of an older folk-song, they are excluded by this characteristic from the popular lyric and belong to poetry of the schools. Marriage, says Jeanroy, is always respected in the true folk-song. Moreover, this is only a negative test. In Portugal, many songs which must be referred to the individual and courtly poet are written in praise of the unmarried girl; while in England, whether it be set down to austere morals or to the practical turn of the native mind, one finds little or nothing to match this troubadour and minnesinger poetry in honor of the stately but capricious dame. The folk-song that we seek found few to record it; it sounded at the dance, it was heard in the harvest-field; what seemed to be everywhere, growing spontaneously like violets in spring, called upon no one to preserve it and to give it that protection demanded by exotic poetry of the schools. What is preserved is due mainly to the clerks and gleemen of older times, or else to the curiosity of modern antiquarians, rescuing here and there a belated survival of the species. Where the clerk or the gleeman is in question, he is sure to add a personal element, and thus to remove the song from its true communal setting. Contrast the wonderful little song, admired by Alceste in Molière's 'Misanthrope,' and as impersonal, even in its first-personal guise, as any communal lyric ever made, with a reckless bit of verse sung by some minstrel about the famous Eleanor of Poitou, wife of Henry II of England. The song so highly commended by Alceste runs, in desperately inadequate translation: —

If the King had made it mine,  
 Paris, his city gay,  
 And I must the love resign  
 Of my bonnie may<sup>6</sup> —

To King Henry I would say:  
 Take your Paris back, I pray;  
 Better far I love my may —  
O joy! —  
 Love my bonnie may!

Let us hear the reckless "clerk": —

If the whole wide world were mine,  
 From the ocean to the Rhine,  
 All I'd be denying  
 If the Queen of England once  
 In my arms were lying!

The tone is not directly communal, but it smacks more of the village dance than of the troubadour's harp; for even Bernart of Ventadour did not dare to address Eleanor save in the conventional tone of despair. The clerks and glee-men, however, and even English peasants of modern times, took another view of the matter. The "clerk," that delightful vagabond who made so nice a balance between church and tavern, between breviary and love-songs, has probably done more for the preservation of folk-song than all other agents known to us. In the above verses he protests a trifle or so too much about himself; let us hear him again as mere reporter for the communal lyric, in verses that he may have brought from the dance to turn into his inevitable Latin: —

Come, my darling, come to me,  
 I am waiting long for thee —  
 I am waiting long for thee,  
 Come, my darling, come to me!

Rose-red mouth, so sweet and fain,  
 Come and make me well again —  
 Come and make me well again,  
 Rose-red mouth, so sweet and fain.

More graceful yet are the anonymous verses quoted in certain Latin love-letters of a manuscript at Munich; and while a few critics rebel at the notion

<sup>6</sup> *May*, a favorite ballad word for "maid," "sweetheart."

of a folk-song, the pretty lines surely hint more of field and dance than of the study: —

Thou art mine,  
I am thine,  
Of that may'st certain be;  
Locked thou art  
Within my heart,  
And I have lost the key:  
There must thou ever be!

Now it happens that this notion of heart and key recurs in later German folk-song. A highly popular song of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has these stanzas: —

For thy dear sake I'm hither come,  
Sweetheart, O hear me woo!  
My hope rests evermore on thee,  
I love thee well and true.  
Let me but be thy servant,  
Thy dear love let me win;  
Come, ope thy heart, my darling,  
And lock me fast within! . . .

Where my love's head is lying,  
There rests a golden shrine;  
And in it lies, locked hard and fast,  
This fresh young heart of mine:  
Oh would to God I had the key —  
I'd throw it in the Rhine;  
What place on earth were more to me,  
Than with my sweeting fine?

Where my love's feet are lying,  
A fountain gushes cold,  
And whoso tastes the fountain  
Grows young and never old:  
Full often at the fountain  
I knelt and quenched my drouth —  
Yet tenfold rather would I kiss  
My darling's rosy mouth!

And in my darling's garden  
Is many a precious flower;  
Oh, in this budding season,  
Would God 'twere now the hour

To go and pluck the roses  
 And nevermore to part:  
 I think full sure to win her  
 Who lies within my heart! . . .

Now who this merry roundel  
 Hath sung with such renown?  
 That have two lusty woodsmen  
 At Freiberg in the town —  
 Have sung it fresh and fairly,  
 And drunk the cool red wine:  
 And who hath sat and listened? —  
 Landlady's daughter fine!

What with the more modern tone, and the lusty woodsmen, one has deserted the actual dance, the actual communal origin of song; but one is still amid communal influences. Another little song about the heart and the key, this time from France, recalls one to the dance itself, and to the simpler tone: —

Shut fast within a rose  
 I ween my heart must be;  
 No locksmith lives in France  
 Who can set it free —  
 Only my lover Pierre,  
 Who took away the key!

Coming back to England, and the search for her folk-song, it is in order to begin with the refrain. A "clerk," in a somewhat artificial lay to his sweetheart, has preserved as refrain what seems to be a bit of communal verse: —

Ever and aye for my love I am in sorrow sore;  
 I think of her I see so seldom any more —

rather a helpless moan, it must be confessed.

Better by far is the song of another *clericus*, with a lusty little refrain as fresh as the wind it invokes, as certainly folk-song as anything left to us: —

Blow, northern wind,  
 Send thou me my sweeting!  
 Blow, northern wind,  
 Blow, blow, blow!

The actual song, though overloaded with alliteration, has a good movement. A stanza may be quoted: —

I know a maid in bower so bright  
 That handsome is for any sight,  
 Noble, gracious maid of might,  
 Precious to discover.

In all this wealth of women fair,  
 Maid of beauty to compare  
 With my sweeting found I ne'er  
 All the country over!

Old too is the lullaby used as a burden or refrain for a religious poem printed by Thomas Wright in his 'Songs and Carols': —

Lullay, myn lykyng, my dere sone, myn swetyng,  
 Lullay, my dere herte, myn owyn dere derlyng.

The same English manuscript which has kept the refrain 'Blow, Northern Wind,' offers another song which may be given in modern translation and entire. All these songs were written down about the year 1310, and probably in Herefordshire. As with the *carmina burana*, the lays of German "clerks," so these English lays represent something between actual communal verse and the poetry of the individual artist; they owe more to folk-song than to the traditions of literature and art: —

A maid as white as ivory bone,  
 A pearl in gold that golden shone,  
 A turtle-dove, a love whereon  
 My heart must cling:  
 Her blitheness nevermore be gone  
 While I can sing!

When she is gay,  
 In all the world no more I pray  
 Than this: alone with her to stay  
 Withouten strife.  
 Could she but know the ills that slay  
 Her lover's life!

Was never woman nobler wrought;  
 And when she blithe to sleep is brought,  
 Well for him who guessed her thought,  
 Proud maid! Yet O,  
 Full well I know she will me nought.  
 My heart is woe.

And how shall I then sweetly sing  
 That thus am marrèd with mourning?  
 To death, alas, she will me bring  
     Long ere my day.  
*Greet her well, the sweetë thing,*  
     *With eyen gray!*

Her eyes have wounded me, i-wis,  
 Her arching brows that bring the bliss;  
 Her comely mouth whoso might kiss,  
     In mirth he were;  
 And I would change all mine for his  
     That is her fere.<sup>7</sup>

Her fere, so worthy might I be,  
 Her fere, so noble, stout and free,  
 For this one thing I would give three,  
     Nor haggle aught.  
 From hell to heaven, if one could see,  
     So fine is naught,  
     [Nor half so free;<sup>8</sup>  
 All lovers true, now listen unto me.]

Now hearken to me while I tell,  
 In such a fume I boil and well;  
 There is no fire so hot in hell  
     As his, I trow,  
 Who loves unknown and dares not tell  
     His hidden woe.

*I will her well, she wills me woe;*  
*I am her friend, and she my foe;*  
 Methinks my heart will break in two  
     For sorrow's might;  
*In God's own greeting may she go,*  
     *That maiden white!*

*I would I were a throstlecock,*  
*A bunting, or a laverock,<sup>9</sup>*  
     *Sweet maid!*  
*Between her kirtle and her smock*  
     *I'd then be hid!*

<sup>7</sup> *Fere*, companion, lover. "I would give all I have to be her lover."

<sup>8</sup> Superfluous verses; but the MS. makes no distinction. *Free* means noble, gracious.  
 "If one could see everything between hell and heaven, one would find nothing so fair and noble."  
<sup>9</sup> Lark.

The reader will easily note the struggle between our poet's conventional and quite literary despair and the fresh communal tone in such passages as we have ventured to put in italics. This poet was a clerk, or perhaps not even that — a gleeman; and he dwells, after the manner of his kind, upon a despair which springs from difference of station. But it is England, not France; it is a maiden, not countess or queen, whom he loves; and the tone of his verse is sound and communal at heart. True, the meter, afterwards a favorite with Burns, is one used by the oldest known troubadour of Provence, Count William, as well as by the poets of miracle plays and of such romances as the English 'Octavian'; but like Count William himself, who built on a popular basis, our clerk or gleeman is nearer to the people than to the schools. The English clerks in question were not regular priests, consecrated and in responsible positions, but students or unattached followers of theology. They sang with the people; they felt and suffered with the people — as in the case of a far nobler member of the guild, William Langland; and hence sundry political poems which deal with wrongs and sufferings endured by the commons of that day. In the struggle of barons and people against Henry III, indignation made verses; and these, too, we owe to the clerks. Such a burst of indignation is the song against Richard of Cornwall, with a turbulent refrain which sounds like a direct loan from the people. One stanza, with this refrain, will suffice. It opens with the traditional "lithe and listen" of the ballad-singer: —

Sit all now still and list to me:  
 The German King, by my loyalty!  
 Thirty thousand pound asked he  
 To make a peace in this country —  
                     And so he did and more!

## REFRAIN

Richard, though thou be ever trichard,<sup>10</sup>  
 Trichen <sup>11</sup> shalt thou nevermore!

This, however, like many a scrap of battle-song, ribaldry exchanged between two armies, and the like, has interest rather for the antiquarian than for the reader. We shall leave such fragments, and turn in conclusion to the folk-song of later times.

The England of Elizabeth was devoted to lyric poetry, and folk-song must have flourished along with its rival of the schools. Few of these songs, however, have been preserved; and indeed there is no final test for the communal quality in such survivals. Certainly some of the songs in the drama of that time are

<sup>10</sup> Traitor.

<sup>11</sup> Betray.

of popular origin; but the majority, as a glance at Mr. Bullen's several collections will prove, are artistic and individual, like the music to which they were sung. Occasionally we get a tantalizing glimpse of another lyrical England, the folk dancing and singing their own lays; but no Autolycus brings these to us in his basket. Even the miracle plays had not despised folk-song; unfortunately the writers are content to mention the songs, like our Acts of Congress, only by title. In the "comedy" called 'The Longer Thou Livest the More Foole Thou Art,' there are snatches of such songs; and a famous list, known to all scholars, is given by Laneham in a letter from Kenilworth in 1575, where he tells of certain songs, "all ancient," owned by one Captain Cox. Again, nobody ever praised songs of the people more sincerely than Shakespeare has praised them; and we may be certain that he used them for the stage. Such is the 'Willow Song' that Desdemona sings — an "old thing," she calls it; and such perhaps the song in 'As You Like It' — 'It Was a Lover and His Lass.' In Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Knight of the Burning Pestle,' Merrythought sings some undoubted snatches of popular lyric, just as he sings stanzas from the traditional ballad; for example, his —

Go from my window, love, go;  
 Go from my window, my dear;  
 The wind and the rain  
 Will drive you back again,  
 You cannot be lodged here —

is quoted with variations in other plays, and was a favorite of the time.

From the time of Henry VIII a pretty song is preserved of this same class:—

Westron wynde, when wyll thou blow!  
 The smalle rain downe doth rayne;  
 Oh if my love were in my armys,  
 Or I in my bed agayne!

This sort of song between the lovers, one without and one within, occurs in French and German at a very early date, and is probably much older than any records of it; as serenade, it found great favor with poets of the city and the court, and is represented in English by Sidney's beautiful lines, admirable for purposes of comparison with the folk-song:—

"Who is it that this dark night  
 Underneath my window plaineth?"  
 "It is one who, from thy sight  
 Being, ah, exiled! disdaineth  
 Every other vulgar light."

A pretty little song, popular in Germany to this day, needs no pompous support of literary allusion to explain its simple pathos; still, it is possible that one meets here a distant echo of the tragedy of obstacles told in the romance of Hero and Leander. When one hears this song, one understands where Heine found the charm of his best lyrics: —

Over a waste of water  
The bonnie lover crossed,  
A-wooing the King's daughter:  
But all his love was lost.

Ah, Elsie, darling Elsie,  
Fain were I now with thee;  
But waters twain are flowing,  
Dear love, 'twixt thee and me!

Even more of a favorite is the song which represents two girls in the harvest-field, one happy in her love, the other deserted; the noise of the sickle makes a sort of chorus. Uhland placed with the two stanzas of the song a third stanza which really belongs to another tune; the latter, however, may serve to introduce the situation: —

I heard a sickle rustling,  
Ay, rustling through the corn:  
I heard a maiden sobbing  
Because her love was lorn.

"Oh let the sickle rustle!  
I care not how it go;  
For I have found a lover,  
A lover,  
Where clover and violets blow."

"And hast thou found a lover  
Where clover and violets blow?  
I stand here, ah, so lonely,  
So lonely,  
And all my heart is woe!"

Another song, widely scattered in varying versions throughout France, is of the forsaken and too trustful maid — 'En Revenant des Noces.'

Back from the wedding-feast,  
All weary by the way,

I rested by a fount  
And watched the waters' play;

And at the fount I bathed,  
So clear the waters' play;

And with a leaf of oak  
I wiped the drops away.

Upon the highest branch  
Loud sang the nightingale.

Sing, nightingale, oh sing,  
Thou hast a heart so gay!

Not gay, this heart of mine:  
My love has gone away,

Because I gave my rose  
Too soon, too soon away.

Ah, would to God that rose  
Yet on the rosebush lay —

Would that the rosebush, even,  
Unplanted yet might stay —

Would that my lover Pierre  
My favor had to pray!

The corresponding Scottish song, beautiful enough for any land or age,  
is the well-known 'Waly, Waly': —

Oh waly, waly, up the bank,  
And waly, waly, down the brae,  
And waly, waly, yon burn-side,  
Where I and my love went to gae.

I lean'd my back unto an aik,  
I thought it was a trusty tree;  
But first it bowed and syne it brak,  
Sae my true-love did lightly me.

Oh waly, waly, but love be bonny  
A little time, while it is new;  
But when 'tis auld it waxeth cauld,  
And fades away like morning dew.

Oh wherefore should I busk my head?  
Or wherefore should I kame my hair?  
For my true-love has me forsook,  
And says he'll never love me mair.

Now Arthur's Seat shall be my bed,  
The sheets shall ne'er be fyled by me;  
Saint Anton's well shall be my drink,  
Since my true-love has forsaken me.

Martinmas wind, when wilt thou blaw  
And shake the green leaves off the tree?  
O gentle Death, when wilt thou come?  
For of my life I am weary.

'Tis not the frost that freezes fell,  
Nor blawing snaw's inclemency;  
'Tis not sic cauld that makes me cry,  
But my love's heart grown cauld to me.

When we came in by Glasgow town,  
We were a comely sight to see;  
My love was clad in the black velvet,  
And I myself in cramasie.

But had I wist, before I kissed,  
That love had been sae ill to win,  
I'd locked my heart in a case of gold,  
And pinned it with a silver pin.

Oh, oh, if my young babe were born,  
And set upon the nurse's knee,  
And I myself were dead and gone,  
[And the green grass growing over me!]

Returning to Germany and to pure lyric, we have a pretty bit which is attached to many different songs: —

High up on yonder mountain  
 A mill-wheel clatters round,  
 And, night or day, naught else but love  
 Within the mill is ground.

The mill has gone to ruin,  
 And love has had its day;  
 God bless thee now, my bonnie lass,  
 I wander far away.

But there is a more cheerful vein in this sort of song; and the mountain offers pleasanter views: —

Oh yonder on the mountain,  
 There stands a lofty house,  
 Where morning after morning,  
                                     Yes, morning,  
 Three maids go in and out.<sup>12</sup>

The first she is my sister,  
 The second well is known,  
 The third, I will not name her,  
                                     No, name her,  
 And she shall be my own!

Finally, that pearl of German folk-song, 'Innsprück.' The wanderer must leave the town and his sweetheart; but he swears to be true, and prays that his love be kept safe till his return: —

Innsprück, I must forsake thee,  
 My weary way betake me  
 Unto a foreign shore,  
 And all my joy hath vanished,  
 And ne'er while I am banished  
 Shall I behold it more.

I bear a load of sorrow,  
 And comfort can I borrow,  
     Dear love, from thee alone,  
 Ah, let thy pity hover  
 About thy weary lover  
     When he is far from home.

<sup>12</sup> The rhyme in German leaves even more to be desired.

My one true love! Forever  
Thine will I bide, and never  
Shall our dear vow be vain.  
Now must our Lord God ward thee,  
In peace and honor guard thee,  
Until I come again.

Modern lyric is deliberately composed by some one, mainly to be sung by some one else; the old communal lyric was sung by the throng and was made in the singing. When festal excitement at some great communal rejoicing in the life of clan or tribe "fought its battles o'er again," the result was narrative communal song. A disguised and baffled survival of this most ancient narrative is the popular ballad. Still more disguised, still more baffled, is the purely lyrical survival of that old communal and festal song; and the best one can do is to present those few specimens found under conditions which preserve certain qualities of a vanished world of poetry.

F. B. GUMMERE

## GOLIARDIC POETRY

**G**OLIARDIC poetry is the name given to a body of Latin secular poetry, mostly lyrics, that was written in Europe during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. The authors of these anonymous poems called themselves Goliards, though why they did so, no one knows. Chaucer uses the word in his description of the Miller, where it means a licentious person; it may be that the term was originally applied in some such way to these writers, and later accepted by them. Some modern scholars believe that the word is related to Goliath, the Philistine giant with whom David contested, and thus indicates that these poets deliberately considered themselves Philistines in their relation to the church and society.

The usual synonym for a Goliard is a wandering scholar. The picture which our older critics have given us is that of a procession of hilarious, drinking, needy students, traveling from one medieval town to another, along the mountain-sides and through the valleys, from Oxford and Cambridge to Rome, taking in Paris, Bordeaux, and Padua on the way, and the German universities on their return. There is much in medieval literature, it must be admitted, to justify such a description, as, for instance, the often quoted remark of a certain monk whose monastery had probably suffered from their raids, "In Paris these scholars seek the liberal arts; in Orleans, authors; in Salerno, gallipots; . . . and in no place decent manners." It is to be remembered also that in various poems they refer to themselves as "wandering scholars." To claim, however, that these wandering students wrote all the so-called Goliardic poetry is unsound. Manifestly editors have placed among the poems many that were not written by clerks at all, but by priests in orders and by monks in good standing. A careful study of these poems also suggests that poets of other kinds had their share in contributing to the stock of the Goliardic poet. Quite possibly the mime, whom recent scholarship has elevated to a place of influence hitherto little dreamed of, contributed his quota, and the simple peasant, singing songs inherited from his mother, may have had his share in swelling the repertoire of these singing students, for it is easy to find more than a hint of popular song in these lyrics. Still we may cling to the idea of the wandering scholar, singing of wine, women, and song itself, as he lazily sauntered along the highways — it is a pleasing picture which need not be surrendered, if we remember that he was probably not the only member of this literary family.

Goliardic poetry consists of two large classes, the serious poems and the trivial songs. Part of the serious poetry is what we should expect from me-

dieval writers of Latin verse. In its epitaphs for the tombs of the dead and in many of its moral platitudes, composed more or less as exercises, it is impossible to find much that is new or startling. Nothing could be more academic than the first poem in the famous collection of Goliardic poetry, the '*Carmina Burana*,' published from a medieval Bavarian manuscript:

"O Fortune, changeable as the moon, always increasing or decreasing; life detestable now grows harder; then it softens the sharp point of the mind in sport; the needy and the powerful it melts away like ice. O horrid lot and empty! O thou wheel turning round! O evil state! O vain prosperity! You show yourself to me clouded and in a veil; now in sport I lay my back bare on account of thy crime."

Though these anonymous poets in their moral poetry built upon the past and used ideas with which they were familiar, one can, even here, sometimes detect in the worn-out themes a sincere feeling, a tone that rings true, as if in their homeless wanderings they had tasted and found true all the moral precepts of Boëthius. Eating one night at a monastery with the monks listening with slight approval to their songs and the next night gathering their scanty skirts about them to keep off the nipping air, they had ample occasion to reflect that "what we see or what we pass over in silence, while sojourning in this present fatherland, we shall lose and we shall miss as we do the leaf of the oak."

Among the serious poems we find occasionally religious lyrics, as if a sudden fit of repentance had come over the wandering ne'er-do-well, or a feeling that he himself should practise a few of his sermons. In one lyric he bids his comrades be of good cheer, "teaching thus in word and life, thrust out the tares by the ploughshare of your mouth and plant lilies with the rose. On the roadway be a soldier willingly, and think of the rewards of the distant home country."

In spite of his pious ideas, the Goliard had not much notion of composing lyrics in the form of prayers; he liked better to preach, and when he grew tired of that, to scold. This poetry of censure forms by far the most important group under the serious poetry. In his satiric thrusts at abuses in the church, the Goliard was a forerunner of the Reformation. So important do writers of church history consider this satiric poetry that they often devote an entire chapter to it. The attacks of the Goliards, though they did not bring about immediate reform, were not without effect. These vagabond students were in an excellent place from which to shoot their stinging arrows at the church, for they were partly inside, with all the advantage that inside knowledge gives, and yet on the outside, with the independence that comes from having little to lose. The Goliards prided themselves on the fact that they were clerks in the church, and they set beneath them in the social scale the peasant countrymen and even the soldiers. They scorned mimes, minstrels, and all such trash as consorted with the laity, while they themselves haunted

monasteries and begged cast-off garments from priests. They had no idea, though, of taking higher orders, nor of closing their eyes to the sins of the world, especially of that world just above them, to which they pretended to belong, but of which they were not. Against all that they found in the church which was contrary to true religion as they conceived it, they directed their scathing fire. Take, for instance, the following:

"Bring forth, O Sion, thy most copious tears like a torrent, for indeed in behalf of thy fathers some have been born to thee, into whose hands thou hast given the scepter of thy empire. Thieves and the allies of thieves, in the troubled order of affairs, abuse the rule of the pastoral office.

"Behold, O God of vengeance, behold, O Thou who seest all things! The church has been made a cave of corpse bearers; into the temple of Solomon the chief of Babylon has come; in the middle he has raised a high throne to himself. Snatching thy sword, come, O Judge of the peoples, come to avenge this crime! Come to cast out the booths of the sellers of doves!"

There is no mincing of words here; nor is it easily possible to read into the poem any selfish motives or to infer that it was written out of personal spite. In their best satirical poetry, the Goliards were sincere, devoted, and unselfish. They attacked, but with a devout purpose; they wished, not to destroy, but to reform.

One other kind of poem, which forms a link between the serious and the trivial poetry, should be mentioned. The Goliard had to live, and he was without money of his own. He doubtless discovered that satire was not often conducive to liberality; he therefore found it wise to preach many sermons in verse upon the rewards of generosity. In one poem he declares, "A difference there is in words, for two words stand at the opposite extremes. *Do, das*, I give, you give, and *teneo*, I withhold, contend in haughty strife; for through *do, das* bounteous men strive to become beloved, but through *teneo* the mean, avaricious fellow is lost." Sometimes these begging poems become attractive songs of the road, to be used as occasions may arise. In the original Latin of the poem given below is an incomplete line, *Decus N* —. The initial *N* stands for the Latin word *nomen*, name, and indicates that the name of the place in which the poet finds himself is to be inserted in this convenient non-rhyming line.

I, a wandering scholar lad,  
Born for toil and sadness,  
Oftentimes am driven by  
Poverty to madness.

Literature and knowledge I  
Fain would still be earning,  
Were it not that want of pelf  
Makes me cease from learning.

These torn clothes that cover me  
Are too thin and rotten;  
Oft I have to suffer cold,  
By the warmth forgotten.

Scarce I can attend at church,  
Sing God's praises duly;  
Mass and vespers both I miss,  
Though I love them truly.

Oh, thou pride of N —,  
By thy worth I pray thee  
Give the suppliant help in need,  
Heaven will sure repay thee.

Take a mind unto thee now  
Like unto St. Martin;  
Clothe the pilgrim's nakedness,  
Wish him well at parting.

So may God translate your soul  
Into peace eternal.  
And the bliss of saints be yours  
In his realm supernal.<sup>1</sup>

The trivial songs of the wandering students are concerned chiefly with nature, love, song, and wine. Spring is the season that is everywhere celebrated with joy and enthusiasm, while winter is mentioned only to heap curses upon it.

In desolate December  
Man bides his time;  
Spring stirs the slumbering embers,  
Love-juices climb.

This attitude, we reflect, is natural enough in the homeless student who found himself often distressed by the inconveniences of freezing; one needs to be comfortable before one can appreciate the warm mellowness of autumn or see the beauty of snow-laden trees. Some lyrics begin by reminding us that winter is past, with its angry storms, its spiteful frosts, snows and ice, its fogs and all its huge untruth. But spring is here; forget the past!

<sup>1</sup> The verse translations are taken from J. A. Symonds, 'Wine, Women, and Song.'

Winter now thy spite is spent,  
 Frost and ice and branches bent!  
 Fogs and furious storms are o'er,  
 Sloth and torpor, sorrows froze,  
 Pallid wrath, lean discontent.

Sometimes he is moved to hurl defiance at winter, telling it to do its worst, it cannot kill his love. "Summer has now wandered far into exile, and the wood is emptied of the song of birds so fair; the freshness of the leaves is fading, and the field is all despoiled of flowers; where once it bloomed, now is it burned, for the wicked strength of cold has laid bare the happy forest, and silently disturbed the quiet air, sending the birds far away. But love keeps alive its warmth. No strength of cold can weaken that. I am crucified with love; I die by the wound in which I glory."

In the spring, the story is different; then nature is all kindly. He sings with delight of the trees in their first buds, the birds hidden in the foliage, the flowers blooming beside the babbling brooks, and the clear sunlight filling the earth. Nature, gay and frolicsome, then invites man to partake of joy with her. The impression which we get from reading these spring poems is that of youth out for a holiday. Through the bending boughs of fresh, green leaves, laden heavily with spring, we catch glimpses of groups of boys and girls dancing in the shade; here comes a fair one with her sister, there is a band of laughing companions joining in the May dance.

Spring is coming, longed-for spring,  
 Now his joy discloses;  
 On his fair brow in a ring  
 Bloom empurpled roses!  
 Birds are gay; how sweet their lay!  
 Tuneful is the measure;  
 The wild woods grow green again,  
 Songsters change our winter's pain  
 To a mirthful pleasure.

Now let young men gather flowers,  
 On their foreheads bind them,  
 Maidens pluck them from the bowers,  
 Then, when they have twined them,  
 Breathe perfume from bud and bloom,  
 Where young love reposes,  
 And into the meadows so  
 All together laughing go,  
 Crowned with ruddy roses.

Pure description in these lyrics is rarely found. Usually a love theme is woven in, and nature is used as a setting, a kind of background, for the real, dominant emotion. Yet in the following poem we have a picture, and nothing else, of a group dancing under a linden-tree, somewhere probably in southern Europe: —

Wide the lime-tree to the air  
Spreads her boughs and foliage fair;  
Thyme beneath is growing  
On the verdant meadow where  
Dancers' feet are going.

Through the grass a little spring  
Runs with jocund murmuring;  
All the place rejoices;  
Cooling zephyrs breathe and sing  
With their summer voices.

In these songs the outdoor medieval student has passed beyond the conventional nature poems of the Middle Ages. Undoubtedly one can find in these poems many inherited literary characteristics, but one feels most of all the freshness and beauty. So true are they in description, so sincere in feeling, so genuine in their expression of enjoyment of the season's gaiety, that we fail to notice whether the diction is conventional. In details and feeling they are true. It may be observed that the nightingale, the poet's bird, is not the only bird that is celebrated; all the birds come in for their share. At times bits of realistic detail are introduced, as in one poem where a maiden is pointed out to us as she stands beside her mother, or in another, where we hear the complaints of petulant old women. We do not often find in the conventional poetry of the Middle Ages such careful description as we get in the following: —

Then the god of dreams doth bring  
To the mind some pleasing thing,  
Breezes soft that rippling blow  
O'er ripe cornfields row by row,  
Murmuring rivers round whose brim  
Silvery sands the swallows skim,  
Or the drowsy circling sound  
Of old mill-wheels going round,  
Which with music steal the mind  
And the eyes in slumber bind.

Spring and nature, beautiful as they are in themselves, would yet be lacking without love. Even in the nature lyrics, the joy of love predominates.

Constantly the poet exults in the qualities of love and the over-happiness of the lover — it is golden love everywhere.

With young leaves the wood is new;  
 Now the nightingale is singing;  
 And field-flowers of every hue  
 On the sward their bloom are flinging.  
 Sweet it is to brush the dew  
 From wild lawns and woody places!  
 Sweeter yet to wreath the rose  
 With the lily's virgin graces;  
 But the sweetest sweet man knows,  
 Is to woo a girl's embraces.

As we might expect, such poetry indulges in praise of the sweetheart who brought this joy. Rarely are her mental traits mentioned; more often her physical features are celebrated. She is praised for her light hair, her high forehead, her gray eyes, her eyebrows dark and arched, her teeth white and bright, her long neck, her slender waist, and so on. This custom of praising the lady in details from head to feet, and in details that seldom varied, was conventional in poetry before the Goliards wrote, and remained so long after. Shakespeare makes fun of it in Olivia's retort to Viola in 'Twelfth Night,' and even the English poets of the seventeenth century frequently found this device an easy way of writing love poems.

All lovers, though, did not find bliss. Many a song has for its burden,

It is a maiden love that makes me sigh,  
 A new love it is wherewith I die.

The woods, one imagines, were filled with sighing swains, who found an outlet for their grief in sweet song.

Wounded with the love alone  
 Of one girl I make my moan;  
 Grief pursues me till she bend  
 Unto me and condescend.

Some lovers sing of their captivity, and continue to do well in steadfastness, though without reward. Occasionally a brave one exhorts others to overcome this foolish pain, declaring that

Love in measure overmuch  
 Strikes man's soul with anguish.

Occasionally some lone lover ventures to inquire into the mysterious union of love and pain, and demands a philosophical explanation of this extraordinary phenomenon. The asserted faithfulness of the lover is a frequent theme, as he attempts to free himself from false blame and suspicion. For him there is only one girl, and her alone he loves and celebrates.

As in the love poetry of other times, the *carpe diem* theme holds an important place; maidens are frequently urged to love while there is yet time, before age comes upon them. Gather ye roses while ye may, is the sage advice of these poet lovers. All nature is gay; other maidens are dancing under the trees; let us also join them.

Like a dream our life is flown,  
Prisoned in a study;  
Sport and folly are youth's own,  
Tender youth and ruddy.

As a counterpart to this appeal, the medieval Goliardic poet frequently gives a picture of old age, with a realistic, though usually conventional, portraying of the infirmities of years. "Choose, ye maidens," he cries, as he urges them to love.

Among these lyrics are found several pastoral poems, modeled probably upon earlier French and Provençal poems. The following lyric will show how skilfully the Goliardic poet adapted to his use a type of poetry that was widespread throughout France. In brevity, conciseness, in the use of descriptive details and in lightness of touch, this pastoral is superior to its French models.

There went out in the dawning light  
A little rustic maiden;  
Her flock so white, her crook so slight,  
With fleecy new wool laden.

Small is the flock, and there you'll see  
The she-ass and the wether;  
This goat's a he, and that's a she,  
The bull-calf and the heifer.

She looked upon the greensward, where  
A student lay at leisure:  
"What do there, young sir, so fair?  
Come, play with me, my treasure!"

Three chief themes the Goliards found worth celebrating in song, wine, love, and poetry. One poet sets these forth in an ascending scale; wine leads to love, and love to the highest pleasure, writing verse.

Sweet in goodly fellowship  
 Tastes red wine and rare O!  
 But to kiss a girl's ripe lip  
 Is a gift more fair O!  
 Yet a gift more sweet, more fine,  
 Is the lyre of Maro!  
 While these three good gifts were mine,  
 I'd not change with Pharaoh.

Bacchus wakes within my breast  
 Love and love's desire,  
 Venus comes and stirs the blest  
 Rage of Phoebus' fire;  
 Deathless honor is our due  
 From the laureled sire:  
 Woe should I turn traitor to  
 Wine and love and lyre!

Should a tyrant rise and say,  
 "Give up wine!" I'd do it;  
 "Love no girls!" I would obey,  
 Though my heart should rue it.  
 "Dash thy lyre!" suppose he saith,  
 Naught should bring me to it;  
 "Yield thy lyre or die!" my breath,  
 Dying, should thrill through it!

The drinking songs of these hilarious students of the Middle Ages are spontaneous; they have that necessary quality of all good lyric verse, they sing themselves. The following song will give an idea of these lyrics, when in a jovial mood, the needy, wandering student tossed care to the winds.

Topers in and out of season!  
 'Tis not thirst but better reason  
 Bids you tope on steadily! —  
 Pass the wine-cup, let it be  
 Filled and filled for bout on bout!  
 Never sleep!  
 Racy jest and song flash out!  
 Spirits leap!

Those who cannot drink their rations,  
 Go, begone from these ovations!

Here's no place for bashful boys,  
 Like the plague, they spoil our joys. —  
 Bashful eyes bring rustic cheer  
     When we're drunk,  
 And a blush betrays a drear  
     Want of spunk.

The song continues in three more stanzas of like nature. Most famous of all their drinking songs is the 'Gaudeamus Igitur,' which is as popular with college students today as it was seven or eight centuries ago.

Let us live, then, and be glad  
     While young life's before us!  
     After youthful pastime had,  
     After old age hard and sad,  
 Earth will slumber o'er us.

Where are they who in this world,  
 Ere we kept, were keeping?  
     Go ye to the gods above;  
     Go to hell; inquire thereof:  
 They are not; they're sleeping.

Brief is life, and brevity  
 Briefly shall be ended:  
     Death comes like a whirlwind strong,  
     Bears us with his blast along;  
 None shall be defended.

Live this university,  
     Men that learning nourish;  
     Live each member of the same,  
     Long live all that bear its name;  
 Let them ever flourish!

Live the commonwealth also,  
     And the men that guide it!  
     Live our town in strength and health,  
     Founders, patrons, by whose wealth  
 We are here provided!

Live all girls! A health to you,  
 Melting maids and beauteous!  
 Live the wives and women too,  
 Gentle, loving, tender, true,  
 Good, industrious, duteous!

Perish cares that pule and pine!  
 Perish envious blamers!  
 Die the Devil, thine and mine!  
 Die the starch-necked Philistine!  
 Scoffers and defamers!

The wandering students, in spite of their serious thoughts at times, and their many needs, enjoyed their life of careless hilarity; they liked to sing of its delights, and to boast of their brotherhood. The following poem, a drinking song of the open road, helps to give us a more complete idea of them and of the life they led, when they flouted the time carelessly. The translation succeeds in catching the light, easy touch of the original Latin. The lyric seems to be meant as a kind of parting song for students who have met by chance in some wayside tavern.

We in our wandering,  
 Blithesome and squandering,  
 Tara, tantara, teino!

Eat to satiety,  
 Drink with propriety;  
 Tara, tantara, teino!

Laugh till our sides we split,  
 Rags on our hides we fit;  
 Tara, tantara, teino!

Jesting eternally,  
 Quaffing infernally;  
 Tara, tantara, teino!

Craft's in the bone of us,  
 Fear 'tis unknown to us;  
 Tara, tantara, teino!

When we're in neediness,  
 Thieve we with greediness;  
 Tara, tantara, teino!

. . . . .

Brother, best friend, adieu!  
Now, I must part from you!  
Tara, tantara, teino!

When will our meeting be?  
Glad shall our greeting be!  
Tara, tantara, teino!

Vows valedictory  
Now have the victory,  
Tara, tantara, teino!

Clasped on each other's breast,  
Brother to brother pressed,  
Tara, tantara, teino!

Goliard was the imaginary head of this brotherhood. His 'Confession,' one of the best of these poems of the wandering students, shows us the true nature of these literary vagabonds in their gay lives, though it does not hint at the more serious side of their characters. The poem is too long to quote in its entirety; a few stanzas, though, will help us round out our conception of these unusual poets.

Boiling in my spirit's veins  
With fierce indignation,  
From my bitterness of soul  
Springs self-revelation:  
Framed am I of flimsy stuff,  
Fit for levitation,  
Like a thin leaf which the wind  
Scatters from its station.

Carried am I like a ship  
Left without a sailor,  
Like a bird that through the air  
Flies where tempests hale her;  
Chains and fetters hold me not,  
Nought avails a jailer;  
Still I find my fellows out  
Toper, gamester, railer.

Prelate, most discreet of priests,  
Grant me absolution!  
Dear's the death whereof I die,  
Sweet my dissolution;

For my heart is wounded by  
 Beauty's soft suffusion;  
 All the girls I come not nigh,  
 Mine are in illusion.

In the second place I own  
 To the vice of gaming:  
 Cold indeed outside I seem,  
 Yet my soul is flaming:  
 But when once the dice-box hath  
 Stripped me to my shaming,  
 Make I songs and verses fit  
 For the world's acclaiming.

In the third place, I will speak  
 Of the tavern's pleasure;  
 For I never found nor find  
 There the least displeasure;  
 Nor shall find it till I greet  
 Angels without measure,  
 Singing requiems for the souls  
 In eternal pleasure.

In the public-house to die  
 Is my resolution;  
 Let wine to my lips be nigh  
 At life's dissolution:  
 That will make the angels cry,  
 With glad elocution,  
 "Grant this toper, God on high,  
 Grace and absolution!"

With the cup the soul lights up,  
 Inspirations flicker;  
 Nectar lifts the soul on high  
 With its heavenly ichor:  
 To my lips a sounder taste  
 Hath the tavern's liquor  
 Than the wine a village clerk  
 Waters for the vicar.

Such my verse is wont to be  
 As the wine I swallow;  
 No ripe thoughts enliven me  
 While my stomach's hollow;

Hungry wits on hungry lips  
Like a shadow follow,  
But when once I'm in my cups,  
I can beat Apollo.

The Wandering Students sang, as we saw at first, of the serious concerns of life, of moral temptations and snares; they flung their arrows at abuses in the church; they also liked their wine, and praised it; they wrote of love, and felt it; and best of all, they loved song and lived for it. And because they lived life with zest and huge enjoyment, they succeeded, like a later English poet, Robert Herrick, who in his light lyrics was a true Goliard in spirit, in capturing those traits of lyric poetry, spontaneity, sincerity, and fitting literary expression, that have distinguished their work from the mass of more scholarly and academic poetry written in their time.

FRANK A. PATTERSON

## THE MEDIEVAL DRAMA

**V**IEWED in its broad outlines, the history of literary drama in Western Europe is not continuous. Between the drama of the ancient world and of the modern there is a gap in time and in manners. What we call the ancient dramatic tradition, conceived by Greece and continued by Rome, was broken at the dissolution of the Roman world during the fifth century. At this period, the drama had reached a low point of degradation through the coarse taste of the Roman populace, and was perhaps heading towards its own ruin. But this decline was accelerated by two special influences: the hostility of the growing Christian Church, which actively assailed the theater, and the incursion into the Roman Empire of Germanic invaders, to whom the drama was alien. Through these influences it came about that, in Europe, the creative art of the drama virtually ceased for the immense period of four or five hundred years. During this time, to be sure, at cross-roads, in market-places, and in banquet-halls, mimes, acrobats, and mummers probably never ceased providing amusements which, in one sense or another, might be called theatrical. But during this long period, plays, as we understand them, were not generally written. The literary tradition of the drama lapsed.

Our present interest, then, is the drama which was revived in Europe in the tenth century, which was widely distributed during the latter centuries of the Middle Ages, and which resulted in a continuous development down to our own time. The most immediately striking aspect of this revival, however, is not its wide distribution and ultimate results, but its auspices. The originator and first patron of modern dramatic art is that very enemy of the older drama, the Christian Church. Modern drama revived as a part of Catholic Christian worship, as an enlargement of the liturgy of the medieval Church.

The liturgical system of the Roman Catholic Church falls conveniently into two divisions: the Mass and the Canonical Office. The Mass observes the sacrament of the Eucharist, and commemorates the Crucifixion. The Canonical Office, on the other hand, involves no religious sacrament, but is a series of eight separate devotional services, distributed at convenient intervals through the twenty-four hours of the day. Although this plan of Roman worship was abundantly comprehensive, vivid, and majestic, the ingenuity of medieval clerics was not satisfied — the official Latin liturgy of the Church seemed to them to require further elaboration and embellishment. Hence, during the ninth and tenth centuries, in numerous monastic centers, developed schools of poetical composition, in which writers undertook to embroider the

accepted liturgical text with phrases, sentences, and verses of their own invention. To this immense collection of literary embroideries has been given the name *tropes*; and among these embellishments, or tropes, are found the little dramatic dialogues which developed into the earliest modern plays.

The first liturgical text to receive this dramatic decoration was the opening part of the Mass of Easter, to which some pious writer prefixed lines that may be translated as follows: —

Whom seek ye in the sepulcher, O followers of Christ?  
 We seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, O angels.  
 He is not here, he has risen, as he foretold.  
 Go, report that he has risen from the sepulcher.

This trope at the opening of the Mass, in the form of a dialogue between the Maries and the angels at the tomb on Easter morning, is the earliest and simplest dramatic text of modern times. It seems to have been composed about the year 900, and it was widely esteemed, for it was used all over western Europe for several centuries. For the transforming of this little dialogue into a true play the only need was that those who sang it should impersonate the characters concerned — should pretend to be Maries and angels. This transformation was achieved early, as may be seen in the following version adopted in England during the latter part of the tenth century for use at the end of Matins in the Canonical Office for Easter:

While the third lesson is being read, let four brothers vest themselves. Let one of these, vested in an alb, proceed as if engaged in a special service, and let him approach the Sepulcher unobtrusively, and sit there quietly with a palm in his hand. While the third responsory is being sung, let the remaining three come forth, vested in copes and bearing in their hands thuribles with incense, and let them approach the Sepulcher with delicate steps, like persons looking for something. These things are done in imitation of the angel sitting in the tomb, and of the women coming with spices to anoint the body of Jesus. When therefore he who sits there beholds the three approaching him like persons bewildered and seeking something, let him, in a soft voice of medium pitch, begin to sing thus:

Whom do you seek in the Sepulcher, O followers of Christ?  
 And when he has sung this to the end let the three [Maries] in unison, reply:  
 Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, O angel.

Then the angel:

He is not here; he has risen, as he foretold.

Go and report that he has risen from the dead.

At this command let the three Maries turn to the choir and say:

Alleluia, the Lord has risen.

After this let the angel, still sitting there, call the Maries back saying the antiphon:

Come and see the place where the Lord was laid, Alleluia.  
 And saying this let the angel rise, lift the veil, and show them the place bare of the cross, and only the cloths laid there in which the cross was wrapped. And when they have seen this, let them set down the thuribles which they carried, in that same Sepulcher, and take the cloth and hold it up before the clergy, and as if to show that the Lord has risen and is no longer wrapped therein, let them sing this antiphon:

The Lord has risen from the Sepulcher, who for us hung on the cross,  
 Alleluia.

And let them lay the cloth on the altar. At the close of the antiphon let the prior, rejoicing in the triumph of our King in conquering death, begin the hymn:

Te Deum Laudamus.

At the beginning of this hymn, let all the bells chime out together.

From such beginnings as these, through the gradual addition of other scenes, were developed Easter plays of considerable length; and upon the model of these plays of Easter, dramatic pieces were composed for Christmas. As time went on plays arose also at other seasons of the liturgical year, such as Innocents' Day, Epiphany, Holy Week, and Ascension Day; and there were plays also for certain saints and prophets. All this body of drama was in Latin, was sung, and was connected with the authorized worship of the Church.

That dramatic performances of this sort should eventually pass from the control of the Church was inevitable. The plays had always been somewhat of an intrusion, and as they increased in size and number, they became a menace to worship. The writers of them, moreover, must have felt the restriction of space and of theme. During the later Middle Ages, therefore, the drama passed from within the church to the churchyard and market-place outside. The new circumstances allowed the use of the vernacular, the introducing of additional Biblical themes, the including of non-ecclesiastical incidents, and the employing of lay actors. Evidences of this transition are manifest in the 'Play of Adam,' of the twelfth century. Although the body of the play is in French, it contains bits of Latin from the church services, and is by no means divorced from ecclesiastical influence. As the generous stage directions show, it was performed just outside the church edifice, and made some use of the building itself.

In England, the vernacular religious drama developed into long cycles of plays performed by the members of the trade guilds. A typical cycle included the whole of sacred history, beginning with the Fall of the Angels and the Creation of Man, proceeding through parts of the Old Testament and the Prophetic Books, and ending with the Nativity, Passion, Ascension, and Last

Judgment. The number of the separate plays composing the cycle differed from town to town, ranging from ten to fifty, in accordance with the detail into which the Scriptural material was divided. This kind of drama is well exemplified by the plays presented by the guilds of Chester during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. The twenty-five separate plays of this cycle were commonly performed on the first three week-days of Whitsuntide, each play being assigned to a separate guild or group of guilds. Each play was performed upon a wagon, or "pageant," described in the records as a "high place made like a house, with two rooms, being open on the top. [In] the lower room they appareled and dressed themselves, and in the higher room they played." A particular pageant-wagon was drawn about the city and halted at each of the several stations where its play was to be presented. The way in which the succession of wagons was managed is well described in one of the Chester manuscripts:

"The places where they played them was in every street. They began first at the Abbey gates, and when the pageant was played, it was wheeled to the High Cross, before the Mayor; and so to every street, and so every street had a pageant playing before them till all the pageants for the day appointed were played. And when one pageant was near ended, word was brought from street to street, that so the [next] might come, in place thereof, exceeding orderly. And all the streets had their pageant before them, all at one time playing together."

The Chester play, 'Noah's Flood,' given below, is typical of the religious plays of the medieval English guilds, and illustrates, through the rôle of Noah's wife, the levity with which medieval playwrights allowed themselves to enliven the Biblical narrative.

Quite separate from the Biblical plays in origin, and somewhat later in development, are the didactic productions called moral plays, or moralities. These plays employ the method of allegory, whereby the personages who on the stage are meant to be interesting not through their own personalities, but through the abstract virtues, vices, or attributes which they represent. These moralities flourished especially during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and were performed by special troops of actors upon fixed stages. The English play, 'Everyman,' arising from the late fifteenth century, illustrates the process through which, in the hands of a talented writer, the abstractions of allegory inevitably flowered into the human values of gaiety, pathos, and remorse.

Alongside the serious and didactic plays that we have been considering existed, during the Middle Ages, a few plays of a more mundane and vivacious nature. Their origin is obscure. They may have arisen from older dramatic traditions which can scarcely be traced through literary records, or they may spring spontaneously from the permanent human impulse towards hilarity. The 'Play of Robin and Marion,' of which a brief scene is given below, was

written by Adam de la Halle, a troubadour of Arras, and was played in 1283 at Naples, before the French court of Charles of Anjou. It may be described as the first dramatic pastoral, and may be viewed as the direct ancestor of the light opera of modern times. Considerably later, and more famous, is the French farce 'Maître Pierre Patelin.' Although the author of this play is not certainly known, he is now thought to have been Guillaume Alécis, a Norman cleric of the fifteenth century. The first edition was printed before 1490 — beyond this we have little knowledge. In reality, 'Patelin' is not mere farce, but comedy of a high order. The simple plot concerns a rascally merchant duped by a rascally lawyer, who is, in his turn, outwitted by a rascally countryman, and the very person whom the lawyer has aided in an attempt to get the better of the merchant. This simple action, however, is imbued with such knowledge of human nature, so gay a fancy, such power of shrewd observation, and so delightful and finished a style, that we must rate 'Patelin' as a masterpiece of French comedy.

KARL YOUNG

## NOAH'S FLOOD

(The Waterleaders and Drawers of Dee)

[*First, in some high place, or in the clouds, if it may be done, God speaks to Noah standing with all his family outside the ark.*]

GOD. I, God, that all the world have wrought,  
 Heaven and earth, and all of nought,  
 I see my people in deed and thought  
 Are foully set in sin.

My ghost <sup>1</sup> shall not remain in man  
 That through fleshly liking is my fone,<sup>2</sup>  
 But till six score years be gone,  
 To look if they will blyn.<sup>3</sup>

Man that I made I will destroy,  
 Beast, worm, and fowl that fly,  
 For on earth they do me annoy,  
 The folk that are thereon;  
 It harms me so hurtfully,  
 The malice now that does multiply,  
 That sore it grieveth me inwardly  
 That ever I made man.

<sup>1</sup> Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> Foe.

<sup>3</sup> Cease.

Therefore, Noah, my servant free,  
 That righteous man art, as I see,  
 A ship right soon thou shalt make thee  
     Of trees both dry and light;  
 Little chambers therein do make,  
 And binding pitch also do take:  
 Within and out do thou not slake <sup>4</sup>  
     To anoint it through thy might.

Three hundred cubits it shall be long,  
 And fifty of breadth, to make it strong,  
 Of height fifty, the range do thou fonge; <sup>5</sup>  
     Thus measure it about.  
 One window fashion through thy wit,  
 One cubit of length and breadth make it;  
 Upon the side a door shall sit,  
     For to come in and out.

Eating places make thou also,  
 Three roofed chambers, one or two,  
 For with water I think to flow <sup>6</sup>  
     Man that I did make;  
 Destroyed all the world shall be,  
 Save thou, thy wife, and thy sons three,  
 And all their wives also with thee,  
     Shall saved be for thy sake.

*Noah.* Ah, Lord, I thank thee loud and still,  
 That to me art in such good will,  
 And sparest me and my house to spill, <sup>7</sup>  
     As now I soothly <sup>8</sup> find;  
 Thy bidding, Lord, I shall fulfil,  
 And never more thee grieve nor grill, <sup>9</sup>  
 That such a grace hast sent me till,  
     Among all mankind.

[*Noah speaks to his family.*]

Have done, you men and women all!  
 Help, for aught that may befall,  
 To make this ship, chamber and hall,  
     As God hath bidden us do.

<sup>4</sup> Slack.

<sup>5</sup> Take.

<sup>6</sup> Flood.

<sup>7</sup> Destroy.

<sup>8</sup> Truly.

<sup>9</sup> Annoy.

*Shem.* Father, I am already bowne: <sup>10</sup>  
 An axe I have here, by my crown,  
 As sharp as any in all this town,  
 For to go thereto.

*Ham.* I have a hatchet wonder keen  
 To bite right well, as may been seen;  
 A better ground one, as I ween,  
 Is not in all this town.

*Japhet.* And I can well now make a pin,  
 And with this hammer knock it in;  
 Go and work without more din,  
 And I am ready bowne.

*Noah's Wife.* And we shall bring the timber too,  
 For we may nothing other do:  
 Women be weak to undergo  
 Any great travail.

*Shem's Wife.* Here is a right good chopping-block,  
 On this you may well hew and knock;  
 Shall none be idle in this flock,  
 Nor now may no man fail.

*Ham's Wife.* And I will go to gather slich <sup>11</sup>  
 The ship here for to clean and pitch:  
 Anointed it must be each stitch, <sup>12</sup>  
 Board, tree, and pin.

*Japhet's Wife.* And I will gather chips up here  
 To make a fire for you in fere, <sup>13</sup>  
 And for to dight <sup>14</sup> you your dinner  
 Against that you come in.

[*Then they make motions as if they were working with various tools.*]

*Noah.* Now in the name of God I will begin  
 To make the ship that we shall go in,  
 That we be ready for to swim  
 At the coming of the flood:  
 These boards I join up here together  
 To keep us safe from all the weather,  
 That we may row both hither and thither,  
 And safe be from this flood.

<sup>10</sup> Prepared.

<sup>11</sup> Pitch.

<sup>12</sup> Fragment.

<sup>13</sup> All together.

<sup>14</sup> Prepare.

Of this tree will I make the mast,  
 Tied with cables that will last,  
 With a sailyard for each blast,  
 And each thing in their kind;  
 With topcastle and bowsprit,  
 With cords and ropes I have all meet  
 To sail forth at the next weete: <sup>15</sup>  
 This ship is at an end.

[*Then Noah and all his family again make motions of working with various tools.*]

Wife, in this castle we shall be kept;  
 My children and thou I would in leapt.  
*Noah's Wife.* In faith, Noah, I had as lief thou slept.  
 For all thy frankish fare, <sup>16</sup>  
 I will not do after thy rede. <sup>17</sup>  
*Noah.* Good wife, do now as I thee bid.  
*Noah's Wife.* By Christ! not ere I see more need,  
 Though thou stand all the day and stare.

*Noah.* Lord, that women be crabbed aye,  
 And never are meek, that dare I say;  
 This is well seen by me today  
 In witness of you each one.  
 Good wife, let me all this bere <sup>18</sup>  
 That thou makest in this place here,  
 For all they ween <sup>19</sup> thou art master —  
 And so thou art, by St. John!

*God.* Noah, take thou thy company,  
 And in the ship hie <sup>20</sup> that you be,  
 For none so righteous man to me  
 Is now on earth living.  
 Of clean beasts do thou with thee take  
 Seven and seven, ere thou slake,  
 He and she, and make <sup>21</sup> to make,  
 Quickly in do thou bring.

Of beasts unclean, two and two,  
 Male and female, without mo, <sup>22</sup>  
 Of clean fowls seven also,  
 The he and she together;

<sup>15</sup> Wet weather.

<sup>17</sup> Advice.

<sup>19</sup> Think.

<sup>21</sup> Mate.

<sup>16</sup> Nonsense.

<sup>18</sup> Noise.

<sup>20</sup> Make haste.

<sup>22</sup> More.

Of fowls unclean, two and no more,  
 As I of beasts did say before,  
 That shall be saved through my lore,  
 Against I send the weather.

Of all the meats that must be eaten  
 Into the ship look there be gotten,  
 For that no way may be forgotten,  
 And do all this bydene,<sup>23</sup>  
 To sustain man and beast therein,  
 Aye till this water cease and blyn.  
 This world is filled full of sin,  
 And that is now well seen.

Seven days be yet coming,  
 You shall have space them in to bring;  
 After that is my liking  
 Mankind for to annoy:  
 Forty days and forty nights  
 Rain shall fall for their unrights,  
 And what I have made through my nights,  
 Now think I to destroy.

*Noah.* Lord, at your bidding I am bayne; <sup>24</sup>  
 Since nothing else your grace will gain,  
 It will I fulfil fain,  
 For gracious I thee find.  
 A hundred winters and twenty  
 This ship making tarried have I,  
 If through amendment thy mercy  
 Would fall unto mankind.

[*Noah summons his family.*]

Have done, you men and women all!  
 Hie you, <sup>25</sup> lest this water fall.  
 That each beast were in his stall,  
 And into the ship brought!  
 Of clean beasts seven there shall be,  
 Of unclean two, this God bade me.  
 This flood is nigh, well may we see;  
 Therefore tarry you not.

<sup>23</sup> In haste.

<sup>24</sup> Ready.

<sup>25</sup> Make haste.

[Then Noah shall enter the ark, and his family shall exhibit and name all the animals painted on sheets of parchment, and after each one has spoken his part, he shall go into the ark, except Noah's wife. The animals painted must conform to the words spoken, and thus let the first son begin.]

*Shem.* Sir, here are lions, leopards in,  
Horses, mares, oxen, and swine,  
Goats, calves, sheep, and kine,  
Here sitting thou mayst see.

*Ham.* Camels, asses, men may find,  
Buck, doe, hart, and hind,  
And beasts of all manner of kind  
Here be, it seems to me.

*Japhet.* Take here cats, and dogs too,  
Otter, fox, fulmart<sup>26</sup> also,  
Hares hopping gaily can go,  
Have cowle<sup>27</sup> here for to eat.

*Noah's Wife.* And here are bears, and wolves set,  
Apes, and owls, and marmoset,  
Weasels, squirrels, and ferret;  
Here they eat their meat.

*Shem's Wife.* Yet more beasts are in this house:  
Here the cats make it full crowse,  
Here a rat and here a mouse,  
They all stand nigh together.

*Ham's Wife.* And here fowls, both less and more:  
Herons, cranes, and bittour,<sup>28</sup>  
Swans, peacocks; and them before  
Meat for this weather.

*Japhet's Wife.* Here are cocks and kites and crows,  
Rooks and ravens, many rows;  
Ducks, curlews: whoever knows  
Each one in his kind?  
And here are doves and ducks and drakes,  
Redshanks, running through the lakes;  
And each fowl that language makes  
In this ship men find.

<sup>26</sup> Polecat.

<sup>27</sup> Tub.

<sup>28</sup> Bittern.

*Noah.* Wife, come in! why standest thou here?  
 Thou art e'er froward, dare I swear.  
 Come in, on God's half! <sup>29</sup> time it were,  
 For fear lest that we drown.

*Noah's Wife.* Yea, sir, set up your sail,  
 And row forth with evil hail!  
 For without any fail  
 I will not from this town.

Unless I have my gossips every one  
 One foot further I will not gone; <sup>30</sup>  
 They shall not drown here, by St. John!  
 If I may save their life!  
 They loved me full well, by Christ!  
 Unless thou'lt let them in thy chest,  
 Row forth, Noah, whither thou list,  
 And get thee a new wife.

*Noah.* Shem, son, lo! thy mother is wraw: <sup>31</sup>  
 Forsooth, such another I do not know!  
*Shem.* Father, I'll fetch her in, I trow, <sup>32</sup>  
 Without any fail.

[*Goes to where his mother is sitting.*]

Mother, my father after thee sent,  
 And bids thee into yon ship wend.  
 Look up and see the wind,  
 For we be ready to sail.

*Noah's Wife.* Son, go back to him and say  
 I will not come therein to-day.

*Noah.* Come in, wife, in twenty devils' way!  
 Or else stand there without.

*Ham.* Shall we all fetch her in?

*Noah.* Yea, sons, in Christ's blessing and mine!  
 I would you hied you betime,  
 For of this flood I am in doubt. <sup>33</sup>

*The Good Gossips* <sup>34</sup> [*singing*].  
 The flood comes in full fleeting fast,  
 On every side it spreadeth full far;  
 For fear of drowning I am aghast,  
 Good gossip, let us draw near.

<sup>29</sup> For God's sake.

<sup>30</sup> Go.

<sup>31</sup> Angry.

<sup>32</sup> Trust.

<sup>33</sup> Fear.

<sup>34</sup> Companions.

And let us drink ere we depart,  
 For oftentimes we have done so;  
 For at a draught thou drink'st a quart,  
 And so will I do ere I go.

*Japhet.* Mother, we pray you altogether,  
 For we are here, your own childer,<sup>35</sup>  
 Come into the ship for fear of the weather,  
 For his love that you bought.<sup>36</sup>

*Noah's Wife.* That will I not for all your call,  
 Unless I have my gossips all.

*Shem.* In faith, mother, yet you shall,  
 Whether you will or not!

[*Then she will go.*]

*Noah.* Welcome, wife, into this boat!

*Noah's Wife.* And have thou that for thy mote!<sup>37</sup>

[*She deals Noah a blow.*]

*Noah.* Aha, marry, this is hot!

It is good to be still.

Ah, children, methinks my boat removes!

Our tarrying here hugely me grieves;

Over the land the water spreads —

God do as he will!

Ah, great God, that art so good;  
 Who works not thy will is wood.<sup>38</sup>

Now all this world is in a flood,

As I see well in sight;

This window I will shut anon,

And into my chamber will I gone,

Till this water, so great one,

Be slakèd through thy might.

[*Then let Noah close the window of the ark, and after remaining within for a short time, let them sing the psalm "Save me, O God." Then let Noah open the window and look out.*]

<sup>35</sup> Children.

<sup>36</sup> Redeemed.

<sup>37</sup> Talking.

<sup>38</sup> Mad.

Now forty days are fully gone.  
 Send a raven I will anon,  
 To see if earth or tree or stone,  
     Be dry in any place;  
 And if this fowl come not again,<sup>39</sup>  
 It is a sign, the sooth to sayne,<sup>40</sup>  
 That dry it is on hill or plain,  
     And God hath done some grace.

[*Then let him send forth a raven, and taking a dove in his hands, let him speak.*]

Ah, Lord, where'er this raven be,  
 Somewhere is dry, right well I see.  
 But yet a dove, by my loyalty,  
     After I will send.  
 Thou wilt turn again to me,  
     . . . . .

For of all fowls that may fly,  
     Thou art most meek and hend.<sup>41</sup>

[*Then let him send forth the dove. And there shall be on the ship another dove bearing an olive branch in its mouth, which some one shall let down from the mast by a cord into Noah's hand. And afterwards let Noah speak.*]

Ah, Lord, blessed be thou aye,  
 That me hast comforted thus today!  
 By this sight I may well say  
     This flood begins to cease:  
 My sweet dove to me brought has  
 A branch of olive from some place;  
 This betokeneth God has done some grace,  
     And is a sign of peace.

Ah, Lord, honored may thou be!  
 All earth dries now, I see,  
 But yet till thou commandest me,  
     Hence will I not hie.  
 All this water is away;  
 Therefore as soon as I may,  
 Sacrifice I shall do in fay<sup>42</sup>  
     To thee devoutly.

<sup>39</sup> Back.

<sup>40</sup> Say.

<sup>41</sup> Gentle.

<sup>42</sup> Faith.

God. Noah, take thy wife anon,  
 And thy children every one;  
 Out of the ship thou shalt gone  
 And they all with thee;  
 Beasts and all that can fly  
 Out anon they shall hie,  
 On earth to grow and multiply;  
 I will that it so be.

Noah. Lord, I thank thee, through thy might,  
 Thy bidding shall be done in hight,<sup>43</sup>  
 And as fast as I may dight.<sup>44</sup>  
 I will do thee honor,  
 And to thee offer sacrifice.  
 Therefore comes in all wise,  
 For of these beasts here that be his  
 Offer I will this store.

*[Then coming forth from the ark with all his family Noah shall take his animals and fowls and make an offering, and slay them.]*

Lord God in majesty,  
 That such grace hast granted me  
 Where all was lost, safe to be,  
 Therefore now I am bowne,<sup>45</sup>  
 My wife, my children, my company,  
 With sacrifice to honor thee,  
 With beasts and fowls, as thou mayst see.  
 I offer here right soon.

God. Noah, to me thou art full able,<sup>46</sup>  
 And thy sacrifice acceptable,  
 For I have found thee true and stable;  
 On thee now must I myn.<sup>47</sup>  
 Curse the earth will I no more  
 For man's sin that grieves me sore,  
 For of youth man full yore  
 Has been inclined to sin.

You shall now grow and multiply,  
 And earth again you edify;  
 Each beast and fowl that may fly  
 Shall be afraid of you;

<sup>43</sup> Haste.<sup>44</sup> Prepare.<sup>45</sup> Ready.<sup>46</sup> Pleasing.<sup>47</sup> Think.

And fish in sea that may flytte<sup>48</sup>  
 Shall sustain you, I you behite;<sup>49</sup>  
 To eat of them do you not let,<sup>50</sup>  
 That clean be you may know.

Whereas you have eaten before  
 Grass and roots since you were bore,<sup>51</sup>  
 Of clean beasts, less and more,  
 I give you leave to eat;  
 Save blood and flesh both in fere<sup>52</sup>  
 Of wrong dead carrion that is here:  
 Eat not of that in no manner,  
 For that aye shall you let.<sup>53</sup>

Manslaughter also you shall flee,  
 For that is not pleasant to me.  
 Who sheds blood, he or she,  
 Anywhere amongst mankind,  
 That blood foully shed shall be,  
 And vengeance have that men shall see.  
 Therefore beware now all ye,  
 You fall not in that sin.

A foreword<sup>54</sup> now with thee I make,  
 And all thy seed too for thy sake,  
 From such vengeance for to slake,  
 For now I have my will;  
 Here I promise thee a hest:<sup>55</sup>  
 That man nor woman, fowl nor beast  
 With water, while the world shall last,  
 I will no more spill.<sup>56</sup>

My bow between you and me  
 In the firmament shall be,  
 By very token that you may see  
 That such vengeance shall cease;  
 That man nor woman shall never more  
 Be wasted by water as is before;  
 But for sin, that grieveth me sore,  
 Therefore this vengeance was.

<sup>48</sup> Swim.<sup>50</sup> Hesitate.<sup>52</sup> Together.<sup>54</sup> Covenant.<sup>56</sup> Destroy.<sup>49</sup> Promise.<sup>51</sup> Born.<sup>53</sup> Leave alone.<sup>55</sup> Promise.

Where clouds in the welkin been <sup>57</sup>  
 That same bow shall now be seen,  
 In token that my wrath and teen <sup>58</sup>

Shall never thus wreaked be;  
 The string is turned toward you,  
 And toward me is bent the bow,  
 That such weather shall never show,  
 And this promise I thee.

My blessing now I give thee here,  
 To thee, Noah, my servant dear,  
 For vengeance shall no more appear.  
 And now, farewell, my darling dear.

## EVERYMAN

*[Here beginneth a treatise how the high Father of Heaven sendeth Death to summon every creature to come and give account of their lives in this world, and is in manner of a moral play.]*

**M**ESSENGER. I pray you all give your audience  
 And hear this matter with reverence,  
 In form a moral play.  
 The Summoning of Everyman is it called,  
 That of our lives and ending shows  
 How transitory we be each day.  
 This matter is wondrous precious  
 But the intent of it is more gracious,  
 And sweet to bear away.  
 The story sayeth: — Man, in the beginning  
 Look well, and take good heed to the ending,  
 Be you never so gay!  
 Ye think sin in the beginning full sweet,  
 Which in the end causeth the soul to weep  
 When the body lieth in clay.  
 Here shall you see how Fellowship, and Jollity,  
 Both Strength, Pleasure, and Beauty,  
 Will fade from thee as flower in May;  
 For ye shall hear how our Heavenly King  
 Calleth Everyman to a general reckoning.  
 Give audience, and hear what he doth say.

<sup>57</sup> Be.<sup>58</sup> Anger.

[*God speaketh.*]

*God.* I perceive, here in my majesty,  
 How that all creatures be to me unkind,  
 Living without fear in worldly prosperity.  
 Of spiritual sight the people be so blind,  
 Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God.  
 In worldly riches is all their mind;  
 They fear not my righteousness, the sharp rod;  
 My love that I showed when I for them died  
 They clean forget, and shedding of my blood red.

Every man liveth so after his own pleasure,  
 And yet of their life they be nothing sure.  
 I see the more that I forbear,  
 The worse they be from year to year.  
 All that liveth fast becometh worse,  
 Therefore I will, in all haste,  
 Have a reckoning of every man's person;

They be so cumbered with worldly riches  
 That needs of them I must do justice,  
 On every man living, without fear.  
 Where art thou, Death, my mighty messenger?

[*Enter Death.*]

*Death.* Almighty God, I am here at your will,  
 Your commandment to fulfil.

*God.* Go thou to Everyman,  
 And show him in my name  
 A pilgrimage he must on him take,  
 Which he in no wise may escape;  
 And that he bring with him a sure reckoning,  
 Without delay or any tarrying.

*Death.* Lord, I will in the world go run over all,  
 And cruelly search out both great and small.  
 Every man will I beset that liveth beastly  
 Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not folly.

[*Everyman enters.*]

Lo, yonder I see Everyman walking.  
 Full little he thinketh on my coming;

His mind is on fleshly lusts, and his treasure;  
 And great pain it shall cause him to endure  
 Before the Lord, Heaven's King.  
 Everyman, stand still! Whither art thou going  
 Thus gaily? Hast thou thy maker forgot?

*Everyman.* Why askest thou?

Wouldest thou know?

*Death.* Yea, sir, I will show you:

In great haste I am sent to thee  
 From God out of his majesty.

*Everyman.* What, sent to me?

*Death.* Yea, certainly.

Though thou hast forgot him here,  
 He thinketh on thee in heavenly sphere,  
 As, ere we depart, thou shalt know!

*Everyman.* What desireth God of me?

*Death.* That shall I show thee:

A reckoning he will needs have  
 Without any longer respite.

*Everyman.* To give a reckoning longer leisure I crave,  
 This blind matter troubleth my wit.

*Death.* Upon thee thou must take a long journey;

Therefore thy account-book with thee bring,  
 For turn back thou cannot by no way.  
 And look thou be sure of thy reckoning,  
 For before God thou shalt answer and show  
 Thy many bad deeds and good but a few,  
 How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,  
 Before the Chief Lord of Paradise.

*Everyman.* Full unready I am such reckoning to give.

I know thee not. What messenger art thou?

*Death.* I am Death, that fear no man;

For every man I arrest, and no man spare;  
 For it is God's commandment  
 That all to me should be obedient.

*Everyman.* O Death! thou comest when I had thee least in mind!

It lieth in thy power me to save;  
 Of my goods will I give thee if thou wilt be kind;  
 Yea, a thousand pounds shalt thou have  
 If thou wilt defer this matter till another day.

*Death.* Everyman, it may not be in any way!

I set not by gold, silver, nor riches,

Nor by pope, emperor, king, duke, nor princes;  
 For, if I would receive great gifts,  
 All the world I might get;  
 But my custom is clean contrary.  
 I give thee no respite. Come hence and do not tarry.

*Everyman.* Alas! shall I have no longer respite?

Well may I say Death giveth no warning!  
 To think on thee, it maketh my heart sick,  
 For all unready is my book of reckoning.

*Death.* It availeth thee not to cry, weep, and pray;  
 But haste thee lightly that thou mayest be gone on that journey.  
 And prove thy friends if thou can;  
 For well thou know, time waiteth for no man;  
 And in the world each living creature  
 For Adam's sin must die by nature.

*Everyman.* Death, if I should this pilgrimage take,  
 And my reckoning surely make,  
 Show me, for Saint Charity,  
 Should I not come back shortly?

*Death.* No, Everyman; when thou art once there,  
 Thou mayest nevermore come here,  
 Trust me verily.

*Everyman.* O gracious God in the high seat celestial,  
 Have mercy on me in this most need!  
 Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial  
 Of mine acquaintance that way me to lead?

*Death.* Yea, if any be so hardy  
 That would go with thee and bear thee company.  
 Haste thee and be gone to God's magnificence,  
 Thy reckoning to give before his presence.  
 What! thinkest thou thy life is given thee,  
 And thy worldly goods also?

*Everyman.* I had supposed so, verily.

*Death.* Nay, nay, it was but lent thee;  
 For, as soon as thou art gone,  
 Another a while shall have it, and then go therefrom,  
 Even as thou hast done.  
 Everyman, thou art mad! Thou hast thy wits five,  
 And here on earth will not amend thy life;  
 For suddenly I do come.

*Everyman.* O wretched caitiff! whither shall I flee  
 That I might scape this endless sorrow?

Now, gentle Death, spare me till tomorrow,  
That I may amend me  
With good advisement.

*Death.* Nay, thereto I will not consent,  
Nor no man will I respite;  
But to the heart suddenly I shall smite  
Without any advisement.  
And now out of thy sight I will me hie.  
See that thou make thee ready shortly,  
For thou mayest say this is the day  
That no man living may scape away.

[*Death departs.*]

*Everyman.* Alas! I may well weep with sighs deep!  
Now have I no manner of company  
To help me on my journey and me to keep;  
And also my writing is full unready.  
What shall I do now for to excuse me?  
I would to God I had never been begot!

. . . . .  
To whom were it best that I my complaint should make?  
What if I to Fellowship thereof spoke,  
And showed him of this sudden chance?  
For in him is all my trust,  
We have in the world so many a day  
Been good friends in sport and play.  
I see him yonder certainly.  
I trust that he will bear me company,  
Therefore to him will I speak to ease my sorrow.  
Well met, Good Fellowship! and good morrow!

[*Fellowship speaketh.*]

*Fellowship.* Everyman, good morrow, by this day!  
Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?  
If anything be amiss, I pray thee me say,  
That I may help to remedy.

*Everyman.* Yea, Good Fellowship, yea;  
I am in great jeopardy.

*Fellowship.* My true friend, show to me your mind;  
I will not forsake thee to my life's end  
In the way of good company.

*Everyman.* That was well spoken, and lovingly!

*Fellowship.* Sir, I must needs know your heaviness;  
 I have pity to see you in any distress.  
 If any have wronged you, ye shall revenged be,  
 Though I on the ground be slain for thee.  
 Even though I knew before that I should die.

*Everyman.* Verily, Fellowship, gramercy.<sup>1</sup>

*Fellowship.* Tush! By thy thanks I set not a straw!  
 Show me your grief and say no more.

*Everyman.* If I my heart should to you break,<sup>2</sup>  
 And then you were to turn your mind from me  
 And would not comfort me when ye hear me speak,  
 Then should I ten times sorrier be.

*Fellowship.* Sir, I saw as I will do, indeed.

*Everyman.* Then you be a good friend at need!  
 I have found you true here before.

*Fellowship.* And so you shall evermore;  
 For in faith, if thou goest to hell,  
 I will not forsake thee by the way.

*Everyman.* You speak like a good friend!  
 I believe you well.  
 I shall deserve it, if I may.

*Fellowship.* I speak of no deserving, by this day!  
 For he that will say and nothing do  
 Is not worthy with good company to go.  
 Therefore, show me the grief of your mind,  
 As to your friend, most loving and kind.

*Everyman.* I shall show you how it is:  
 Commanded am I to go a journey —  
 A long way, hard and dangerous —  
 And give a strict account without delay,  
 Before the high judge, Adonay.<sup>3</sup>  
 Wherefore I pray you bear me company,  
 As ye have promised in this journey.

*Fellowship.* That is matter indeed! Promise is duty;  
 But, if I should take such a voyage on me,  
 I know well it should be to my pain.  
 Also it maketh me afraid, for certain.  
 But let us take counsel here as well as we can;  
 For your words would frighten even a strong man.

*Everyman.* Why, ye said if I had need  
 Ye would never forsake me, living or dead,  
 Though it were to hell truly!

<sup>1</sup> Hearty thanks.

<sup>2</sup> Unfold.

<sup>3</sup> A name for God.

*Fellowship.* So I said, certainly!

But such pleasures be set aside, truth to say.

And also, if we took such a journey,

When should we come back?

*Everyman.* Nay, never again, till the day of doom!

*Fellowship.* In faith! then will I not come there!

Who hath you these tidings brought?

*Everyman.* Indeed, Death was with me here.

*Fellowship.* Now, by God, that all hath bought,<sup>4</sup>

If Death were the messenger,

For no man that is living today

Will I go on that loathèd journey —

Not for the father that begat me!

*Everyman.* Ye promised otherwise, pardy! <sup>5</sup>

*Fellowship.* I wot well I said so, truly.

And yet, if thou wilt eat and drink and make good cheer,

Or haunt of women the lusty company,

I would not forsake you while the day is clear.

Trust me verily.

*Everyman.* Yea, thereto ye would be ready!

To go to mirth, pleasure, and play,

Your mind will sooner apply,

Than to bear me company in my long journey.

*Fellowship.* Now, in good faith,

I will not that way

But if thou wilt murder or any man kill,

In that I will help thee with a good will.

*Everyman.* O, that is simple advice indeed.

Gentle Fellowship, help me in my necessity!

We have loved long, and now I am in need;

And now gentle Fellowship, remember me!

*Fellowship.* Whether you have loved me or no,

By St. John, I will not with thee go!

*Everyman.* Yet, I pray thee, take the trouble and do this much for me

To go along with me, for Saint Charity,

And comfort me till I come without the town.

*Fellowship.* Nay, even if thou wouldest give me a new gown,

I will not a foot with thee go!

But if thou hadst tarried, I would not have left thee so.

And now God speed thee on thy journey!

For from thee I will depart as fast as I may.

<sup>4</sup> Redeemed.

<sup>5</sup> By heaven.

*Everyman.* Whither away, Fellowship? Will you forsake me?

*Fellowship.* Yea, by my faith! To God I commit thee.

*Everyman.* Farewell, good Fellowship! For thee my heart is sore.

Adieu forever! I shall see thee no more!

*Fellowship.* In faith, Everyman, farewell now at the end!

For you I will remember that parting is mourning.

[*Exit Fellowship.*]

*Everyman.* Alack! shall we thus separate indeed

(Ah, Lady help!) without any more comfort?

Lo, Fellowship forsaketh me in my utmost need.

For help in this world whither shall I resort?

. . . . .

Now whither for succor shall I flee,

Since that Fellowship hath forsaken me?

To my kinsmen will I truly,

Praying them to help me in my necessity.

I believe that they will do so

For "Nature will creep where it may not go."

I will go try, for yonder I see them go.

Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen?

[*Enter Kindred and Cousin.*]

*Kindred.* Here we be now, at your commandment.

Cousin, I pray you show us your intent

In any wise, and do not spare.

*Cousin.* Yea, Everyman, and to us declare

If ye be disposed to go any whither;

For, know you well, we will live and die together.

*Kindred.* In wealth and woe we will with you hold,

For over his kin a man may be bold.

*Everyman.* Gramercy,<sup>6</sup> my friends and kinsmen kind.

Now shall I show you the grief of my mind.

I was commanded by a messenger

That is a high king's chief officer;

He bade me go a pilgrimage to my pain;

And I know well I shall never come again;<sup>7</sup>

Also, I must give a reckoning strait,<sup>8</sup>

For I have a great enemy that for me in wait.

Who intendeth me to hinder.

<sup>6</sup> Hearty thanks.

<sup>7</sup> Back.

<sup>8</sup> Strict.

*Kindred.* What account is that which you must render?

That would I know.

*Everyman.* Of all my works I must show  
How I have lived, and my days spent;  
Also of evil deeds that I have done  
In my time since life was to me lent,  
And of all virtues that I have refused.  
Therefore I pray you go thither with me  
To help to make my account, for Saint Charity.

*Cousin.* What! to go thither? Is that the matter?

Nay, Everyman, I had rather eat naught but bread and water,  
All these five years and more.

*Everyman.* Alas, that ever I was born!  
For now shall I never be merry,  
If that you forsake me.

*Kindred.* Ah, Sir, what! ye be a merry man!  
Take good heart to you, and make no moan.  
But one thing, I warn you, by Saint Anne —  
As for me, ye shall go alone!

*Everyman.* My cousin, will you not with me go?

*Cousin.* No, by Our Lady! I have the cramp in my toe,  
Trust not to me; for, so God me speed,  
I will deceive you in your utmost need.

*Everyman.* Now show me the very effect of your mind;  
Will you go with me, or abide behind?

*Kindred.* Abide behind? yea, that will I if I may!  
Therefore, farewell till another day.

[Exit Kindred.]

*Cousin.* Cousin Everyman, farewell now;  
For verily I will not go with you.  
Also of mine own life an unready reckoning  
I have to account; therefore I make tarrying.  
Now God keep thee, for now I go.

[Exit Cousin.]

*Everyman.* Ah, Jesus! is it all come to this?  
Lo, "fair words maketh fools fain";  
They promise, and nothing will do certain.  
My kinsmen promised me faithfully  
For to abide with me steadfastly;

And now fast away do they flee.  
 Even so Fellowship promised me.  
 What friend were it best of me to provide?  
 I lose my time here longer to abide;  
 Yet in my mind a thing there is:  
 All my life I have loved riches;  
 If that my Goods now help me might  
 He would make my heart full light.  
 I will speak to him in this distress.  
 Where art thou, my Goods and riches?  
*Goods* [*off stage*]. Who calleth me? Everyman? What! hast thou haste?  
 I lie here in corners, trussed and piled so high,  
 And in chests I am locked so fast,  
 Also sacked in bags — thou mayst see with thine eye —  
 I cannot stir. In packs, low I lie.  
 What would ye have? lightly to me say.  
*Everyman*. Come hither, Goods, in all the haste thou may;  
 For counsel I desire of thee.

[*Enter Goods.*]

*Goods*. Sir, if ye in the world have sorrow or adversity,  
 That can I help you to remedy shortly.  
*Everyman*. It is another trouble that grieveth me;  
 In this world it is not, I tell thee so;  
 I am sent for another way to go,  
 To give a strict account general  
 Before the highest Jupiter of all;  
 And all my life I have had joy and pleasure in thee,  
 Therefore, I pray thee, go with me;  
 For, peradventure, thou mayst before God Almighty  
 My reckoning help to clean and purify;  
 For it is a common saying  
 That "money maketh all right that is wrong."  
*Goods*. Nay, Everyman, I sing another song!  
 I follow no man on such voyages;  
 For, if I went with thee,  
 Thou shouldest fare much the worse for me;  
 For because on me thou did set thy mind,  
 Thy reckoning I have made blotted and blind,  
 That thine account thou cannot make truly —  
 And that hast thou for the love of me!  
*Everyman*. That would grieve me full sore,

When I should come to that fearful answer.

Up, let us go thither together.

*Goods.* Nay, not so! I am too brittle; I may not endure.

I will follow no man one foot, be ye sure.

*Everyman.* Alas! I have thee loved, and had great pleasure

All my life-days in goods and treasure.

*Goods.* That is truly to thy damnation,

For my love is contrary to the love everlasting.

But if thou in life had loved me moderately

So as to the poor to give part of me,

Then shouldest thou not in this dolor be,

Nor in this great sorrow and care.

*Everyman.* Lo! now was I deceived ere I was ware;

And all, I know well, from misspending of time.

*Goods.* What! thinkest thou that I am thine?

*Everyman.* I had thought so.

*Goods.* Nay, Everyman; I say no.

As for a while I was lent thee;

A season thou hast had me in prosperity.

My nature is man's soul to kill;

If I save one, a thousand do I spill.<sup>9</sup>

Thinkest thou that I will follow thee

From this world? nay, verily.

*Everyman.* I had thought otherwise.

*Goods.* Therefore to thy soul Goods is a thief;

For when thou art dead, under this guise,

Another I deceive in this same wise

As I have done thee, and all to his soul's grief.

*Everyman.* O false Goods! cursed may thou be,

Thou traitor to God, that has deceived me

And caught me in thy snare!

*Goods.* Marry! thou broughtest thyself to this care!

Whereof I am right glad.

I must needs laugh; I cannot be sad.

*Everyman.* Ah, Goods, thou hast had long my hearty love;

I gave thee that which should be the Lord's above.

But wilt thou not go with me indeed?

I pray thee truth to say.

*Goods.* No, so God me speed!

Therefore farewell, and have good day! [*Exit Goods.*]

*Everyman.* O, to whom shall I make my moan

For to go with me in that heavy journey?

<sup>9</sup> Destroy.

First, Fellowship said he would go with me —  
 His words were very pleasant and gay;  
 But afterwards he left me alone.  
 Then spake I to my kinsmen, all in despair,  
 And they also gave me words fair —  
 They lacked no fair speaking!  
 But all forsook me in the ending.  
 Then went I to my Goods that I loved best,  
 In hope to have comfort; but there had I least,  
 For my Goods sharply did me tell  
 That he bringeth many into hell.  
 Then of myself I was ashamed;  
 And so I am worthy to be blamed.  
 Thus may I well myself hate.  
 Of whom shall I now counsel take?  
 I think that I shall never speed  
 Till I go to my Good Deeds.  
 But alas! she is so weak  
 That she can neither walk nor speak.  
 Yet will I venture on her now.  
 My Good Deeds, where be you?

[*Good Deeds speaks from the ground.*]

*Good Deeds.* Here I lie, cold in the ground.

Thy sins have me so sorely bound,  
 That I cannot stir.

*Everyman.* O Good Deeds! I stand in fear!

I must pray you for counsel,  
 For help now would come right well.

*Good Deeds.* Everyman, I have understanding

That ye be summoned your account to make:  
 Before Messias, of Jerusalem King;

If you follow my advice, that journey with you will I take.

*Everyman.* Therefore I come to you my moan to make.

I pray you that ye will go with me.

*Good Deeds.* I would full fain, but I cannot stand, verily.

*Everyman.* Why, did something amiss you befall?

*Good Deeds.* Yea, Sir, I may thank you for all!

If you had ever encouraged me,  
 Your book of account full ready would be.

[*Shows Everyman his record-book.*]

Look! the books of your works and deeds!  
Behold how they lie under foot  
To your soul's heaviness.

*Everyman.* Our Lord Jesus help me!

For one letter here I cannot see.

*Good Deeds.* Here is a blind reckoning in time of distress!

*Everyman.* Good Deeds, I pray you help me in this need,  
Or else I am forever damned indeed!

. . . . .

Good Deeds, your counsel I pray you give me.

*Good Deeds.* That shall I do verily.

Though on my feet I may not go,  
I have a sister that shall be with you also,  
Called Knowledge, which shall with you abide  
To help you make that dreadful reckoning.

[*Enter Knowledge.*]

*Knowledge.* Everyman, I will go with thee and be thy guide,  
In thy utmost need to go by thy side.

*Everyman.* In good condition I am now in everything,  
And am wholly content with this good thing,  
Thanks be to God, my creator!

*Good Deeds.* And when he hath brought you there  
Where thou shalt heal thee of thy smart,  
Then go you with your reckoning and your Good Deeds together  
For to make you joyful at heart  
Before the blessed Trinity.

*Everyman.* My Good Deeds, gramercy!  
I am well content, certainly,  
With your words sweet.

*Knowledge.* Now go we together lovingly  
To Confession, that cleansing river.

*Everyman.* For joy I weep! I would we were there!  
But I pray you, give me cognition<sup>10</sup>  
Where dwelleth that holy man, Confession?

*Knowledge.* In the house of salvation;  
We shall find him in that place,  
That shall us comfort, by God's grace.

[*Knowledge leads Everyman to Confession.*]

<sup>10</sup> Knowledge.

Lo, this is Confession. Kneel down and ask mercy;  
For he is in good favor with God Almighty.

*Everyman.* O glorious fountain, that all uncleanness doth clarify,  
Wash from me the spots of vice unclean,  
That on me no sin may be seen.  
I come with Knowledge for my redemption,  
Redeemed with hearty and full contrition;  
For I am commanded a pilgrimage to take,  
And great accounts before God to make.  
Now I pray you, Shrift, mother of salvation,  
Help my Good Deeds because of my piteous exclamation.

*Confession.* I know your sorrow well, *Everyman*,  
Because with Knowledge you come to me,  
I will you comfort as well as I can;  
And a precious jewel I will give thee,  
Called penance, lightener of adversity;  
Therewith shall your body chastised be  
With abstinence, and perseverance in God's service.

[*Offers Everyman a scourge.*]

Here shall you receive that scourge of me,  
Which is penance strong that you must endure  
To remember thy Saviour was scourged for thee  
With sharp scourges, and suffered it patiently.

*Everyman.* Thanked be God for his gracious work!  
For now I will my penance begin;  
This hath rejoiced and lightened my heart,  
Though the knots be painful and hard within.

[*Everyman kneels in prayer.*]

O eternal God! O heavenly figure!  
O way of righteousness! O goodly vision,  
Which descended down in a virgin pure  
Because he would every man redeem  
Which Adam forfeited by his disobedience.  
O blessed Godhead! elect and high divine!  
Forgive me my grievous offence.  
Here I cry thee mercy in this presence.  
O spiritual treasurer! O ransomer and redeemer!  
Of all the world hope and conductor!

Mirror of joy! founder of mercy  
Which illumineth heaven and earth thereby!  
Hear my clamorous complaint, though it late be.

. . . . .

O Mary! pray to the Maker of everything  
Me for to help at my ending.

. . . . .

And, Lady, that I may by means of thy prayer  
Of your Son's glory to be partner  
Through the mediation of his Passion I it crave.  
I beseech you help my soul to save.

[*He rises.*]

Knowledge, give me the scourge of penance.  
My flesh therewith shall give acquittance.  
I will now begin if God give me grace.

*Knowledge.* Everyman, God give you time and space!  
Thus I bequeath you into the hands of our Saviour;  
Now may you make your reckoning sure.

*Everyman.* In the name of the Holy Trinity  
My body sorely punished shall be.

[*Everyman begins to scourge himself.*]

Take this, body, for the sin of the flesh!  
Also thou delightest to go gay and fresh,  
And into the way of damnation thou did me bring;  
Therefore suffer now strokes of punishing!  
Now of penance I will wade the water clear,  
To save me from purgatory, that sharp fire.

[*Good Deeds rises from the floor.*]

*Good Deeds.* I thank God, now I can walk and go,  
And am delivered of my sickness and woe.  
Therefore with Everyman I will go, and not spare;  
His good works I will help him to declare.

*Knowledge.* Now, Everyman, be merry and glad!  
Your Good Deeds cometh now, ye may not be sad.  
Now is your Good Deeds whole and sound,  
Going upright upon the ground.

*Everyman.* My heart is light, and shall be evermore.  
Now will I smite faster than I did before.

. . . . .

*Knowledge.* Be no more sad, but ever more rejoice;  
 God seeth thy living in his throne above.  
 Put on this garment to thy behoof,  
 Which is wet with your tears,  
 Or else before God you may it miss,  
 When ye to your journey's end come shall.

*Everyman.* Gentle Knowledge, what do you it call?

*Knowledge.* It is the garment of sorrow;  
 From pain it will you borrow;  
 Contrition it is  
 That getteth forgiveness;  
 It pleaseth God passing well.

*Good Deeds.* Everyman, will you wear it for your health?

[*Everyman puts on the garment of contrition.*]

*Everyman.* Now blessed be Jesus, Mary's son,  
 For now have I on true contrition.  
 And let us go now without tarrying.  
 Good Deeds, have we clear our reckoning?

*Good Deeds.* Yea, indeed, I have here.

*Everyman.* Then I trust we need not fear.  
 Now, friends, let us not part in twain!

*Knowledge.* Nay, Everyman, that will we not certain.

*Good Deeds.* Yet must thou lead with thee  
 Three persons of great might.

*Everyman.* Who should they be?

*Good Deeds.* Discretion and Strength they hight,<sup>11</sup>  
 And thy Beauty may not abide behind.

*Knowledge.* Also ye must call to mind  
 Your Five Wits as for your counselors.

*Good Deeds.* You must have them ready at all hours.

*Everyman.* How shall I get them hither?

*Knowledge.* You must call them all together,  
 And they will hear you immediately.

*Everyman.* My friends, come hither and be present,  
 Discretion, Strength, my Five Wits, and Beauty!

[*All four enter.*]

*Beauty.* Here at your will we be all ready.

What will ye that we should do?

*Good Deeds.* That ye would with Everyman go,

<sup>11</sup> Are called.

And help him in his pilgrimage.

Advise you, will ye with him or not, in that voyage?

*Strength.* We will bring him all thither,

To his help and comfort, ye may believe me.

*Discretion.* So will we go with him all together.

*Everyman.* Almighty God, loved may thou be!

I give thee praise that I have hither brought

Strength, Discretion, Beauty, and Five Wits. Lack I naught.

And my Good Deeds, with Knowledge clear,

All be in company at my will here.

I desire no more for my business.

*Strength.* And I, Strength, will by you stand in distress,

Though thou would in battle fight on the ground.

*Five Wits.* And though it were through the world round

We will not depart for sweet nor sour.

*Beauty.* No more will I, unto Death's hour

Whatsoever there befall.

*Discretion.* Everyman, advise you first of all;

Go with a good advisement and deliberation.

We all give you virtuous admonition

That all shall be well.

*Everyman.* My friends, hearken what I will tell —

I pray God reward you in his heavenly sphere —

Now hearken all that be here,

For I will make my testament

Here before you all present:

In alms, half my goods I will give with my hands twain

In the way of charity with good intent,

And the other half still shall remain,

In bequest to be returned where it ought to be.

This I do in despite of the fiend of hell,

To go quite out of his peril

Ever and after this day.

*Knowledge.* Everyman, hearken what I say:

Go to Priesthood, I you advise,

And receive of him, in any wise,

The holy sacrament and ointment together;

Then see that you shortly turn again hither;

We will all abide you here.

. . . . .

*Everyman.* Fain would I receive that holy body,

And meekly to my spiritual father will I go.

*Five Wits.* Everyman, that is the best that ye can do.  
 God will you to salvation bring,  
 For priesthood exceedeth all other thing:  
 To us holy scripture they do teach,  
 And converteth man from sin heaven to reach;  
 God hath to them more power given  
 Than to any angel that is in heaven.

. . . . .

[*Exit Everyman to receive from the Priest the sacrament and extreme unction.  
 Knowledge and the other persons remain.*]

*Knowledge.* If priests be good it is so surely.  
 But when Jesu hanged on the cross with great smart,  
 There he gave out of his blessed heart  
 The same sacrament in great torment.  
 He sold them not to us, that Lord omnipotent;  
 Therefore Saint Peter the Apostle doth say  
 That Jesus' curse have all they  
 Which God their Saviour do buy or sell.  
 Or they for any money do take or tell.  
 Sinful priests give the sinners example bad;  
 Their children sit by other men's fires, I have heard;  
 And some haunt women's company  
 With unclean life, as lusts of lechery.  
 These be with sin made blind.

*Five Wits.* I trust to God no such may we find.  
 Therefore let us priesthood honor,  
 And follow their doctrine for our souls' succor.  
 We be their sheep, and they shepherds be,  
 By whom we all kept in surety.  
 Peace! for yonder I see Everyman come,  
 Which hath made true satisfaction.

*Good Deeds.* Methinks it is he indeed.

[*Everyman returns.*]

*Everyman.* Now may Jesus all of you comfort and speed!  
 I have received the sacrament for my redemption  
 And then mine extreme unction.  
 Blessed be all they that counseled me to take it!  
 And now, friends, let us go without longer respite.  
 I thank God that ye have tarried so long.  
 Now set each of you on this road your hand,  
 And shortly follow me.

I go before where I would be. God be our guide!

*Strength.* Everyman, we will not from you go

Till ye have done this voyage long.

*Discretion.* I, Discretion, will bide by you also.

*Knowledge.* And though this pilgrimage be never so strong,

I will never part from you.

Everyman, I will be as sure by thee

As ever I did by Judas Maccabee.

[*They proceed in a group to the grave.*]

*Everyman.* Alas! I am so faint I may not stand!

My limbs under me do fold!

Friends, let us not turn again to this land,

Not for all the world's gold;

For into this cave must I creep

And turn to earth, and there to sleep.

*Beauty.* What! into this grave? Alas!

*Everyman.* Yea, there shall ye consume, great and small.

*Beauty.* And what! must I smother here?

*Everyman.* Yea, by my faith, and never more appear.

In this world live no more we shall,

But in heaven before the highest Lord of all.

*Beauty.* I cross out all this! Adieu, by Saint John!

I doff my cap to my lap, and am gone.

*Everyman.* What, Beauty! whither will ye?

*Beauty.* Peace! I am deaf. I look not behind me,

Not if thou wouldst give me all the gold in thy chest!

[*Exit Beauty.*]

*Everyman.* Alas! whereto may I trust?

Beauty goeth fast away from me!

She promised with me to live and die.

*Strength.* Everyman, I will thee also forsake and deny.

Thy game liketh me not at all.

*Everyman.* Why, then, ye will forsake me all?

Sweet Strength, tarry a little space.

*Strength.* Nay, Sir, by the rood of grace!

I will hie me from thee fast

Though thou weep till thy heart burst.

*Everyman.* Ye would ever abide with me, ye said.

*Strength.* Yea, I have you far enough conveyed!

Ye be old enough, I understand,

Your pilgrimage to take in hand.

I repent me that I hither came.

*Everyman.* Strength, for displeasing you I am to blame,

Yet a promise is a debt, this ye well wot.

*Strength.* In faith, I care not!

Thou art but a fool to complain.

You spend your speech and waste your brain.

Go, thrust thee into the ground!

[*Exit Strength.*]

*Everyman.* I had thought more sure I should you have found.

He that trusteth in his Strength

She him deceiveth at length.

Both Strength and Beauty forsake me;

Yet they promised me fair and lovingly.

*Discretion.* Everyman, I will after Strength be gone.

As for me, I will leave you alone.

*Everyman.* Why, Discretion! will ye forsake me?

*Discretion.* Yea, in faith, I will go from thee;

For when Strength goeth before,

I follow after ever more.

*Everyman.* Yet, I pray thee, for the love of the Trinity,

Look in my grave once, pityingly.

*Discretion.* Nay, so nigh will I not come.

Farewell everyone!

[*Exit Discretion.*]

*Everyman.* O, all things fail, save God alone —

Beauty, Strength, and Discretion;

For when Death bloweth his blast

They all run from me full fast.

*Five Wits.* Everyman, my leave now of thee I take.

I will follow the others, for here I thee forsake.

*Everyman.* Alas! then may I wail and weep,

For I took you for my best friend.

*Five Wits.* I will no longer thee keep.

Now farewell, and there an end!

[*Exit Five Wits.*]

*Everyman.* O Jesu, help! All hath forsaken me!

*Good Deeds.* Nay, Everyman; I will abide with thee.

I will not forsake thee indeed;

Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.

*Everyman.* Gramercy, Good Deeds! Now may I true friends see.

They have forsaken me every one;

I loved them better than my Good Deeds alone.

Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?

*Knowledge.* Yea, Everyman, when you to Death shall go;

But not yet, for no manner of danger.

*Everyman.* Gramercy, Knowledge, with all my heart!

*Knowledge.* Nay, yet I will not from hence depart

Till I see where you shall be come.

*Everyman.* Methink alas, that I must be gone

To make my reckoning, and my debts pay;

For I see my time is nigh spent away.

Take example, all ye that this do hear or see,

How they that I loved best do forsake me,

Except my Good Deeds that bideth truly.

*Good Deeds.* All earthly things are but vanity.

Beauty, Strength, and Discretion do man forsake,

Foolish friends and kinsmen, that fair spake —

All fleeth save Good Deeds, and that am I.

*Everyman.* Have mercy on me, God most mighty,

And stand by me, thou Mother and Maid, Holy Mary!

*Good Deeds.* Fear not; I will speak for thee.

*Everyman.* Here I cry God mercy!

*Good Deeds.* Shorten our end and lessen our pain.

Let us go, and never come again.

*Everyman.* Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend.

Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost.

As thou me boughtest,<sup>12</sup> so me defend,

And save me from the fiend's boast,

That I may appear with that blessed host

That shall be saved at the day of doom.

*In manus tuas,*<sup>13</sup> of mights the most

Forever, *commendo spiritum meum!*<sup>14</sup>

[*Everyman and Good Deeds descend into the grave.*]

*Knowledge.* Now hath he suffered what we all shall endure.

The Good Deeds shall make all sure.

Now hath he made ending.

Methinketh that I hear angels sing,

And make great joy and melody

Where Everyman's soul received shall be.

<sup>12</sup> Redeemedst.

<sup>13</sup> Into thy hands.

<sup>14</sup> I commit my spirit.

Angel. Come, excellent elect spouse to Jesu!  
 Here above thou shalt go,  
 Because of thy singular virtue.  
 Now the soul is taken from the body,  
 Thy reckoning is crystal clear.  
 Now shalt thou in to the heavenly sphere;  
 Unto which ye all shall come  
 That live well before the day of doom.

[*Enter the Doctor to recite the Epilogue.*]

Doctor. This moral men may have in mind.  
 Ye hearers, take it as of worth, old and young!  
 And forsake Pride, for he deceiveth you in the end.  
 And remember Beauty, Five Wits, Strength, and Discretion,  
 They all at the last do every man forsake,  
 Save that his Good Deeds there doth he take —  
 But beware, if they be small,  
 Before God he hath no help at all.  
 None excuse may be there for every man.  
 Alas, how shall he do, then?  
 For, after death, amends may no man make;  
 For then mercy and pity do him forsake.  
 If his reckoning be not clear when he doth come,  
 God will say: "*Ite, maledicti, in ignem eternum!*"<sup>15</sup>  
 And he that hath his account whole and sound,  
 High in heaven he shall be crowned.  
 Unto which place God bring us all thither,  
 That we may live body and soul together.  
 Thereto help, the Trinity!  
 Amen, say ye, for Saint Charity.

FINIS

## ROBIN AND MARION

[*Here begins the play of Robin and Marion which Adam wrote; or The Play of the Shepherd and the Shepherdess.*]

MARION [*sings*]. Robin loves me, I am his; Robin has asked for me, he shall have me; Robin has bought me a fine scarlet dress, a cloak, and a girdle, a leu i va! Robin loves me, I am his; Robin has asked for me, he shall have me.

<sup>15</sup> Go, cursed ones, into fire everlasting.

*The Knight* [*sings*]. I came back from the tourney, and I found Marion alone, with her pretty figure.

*Marion*. Oh Robin, if you love me, for love's sake take me away.

*The Knight*. Shepherdess, God give you good day!

*Marion*. God preserve you, sir!

*The Knight*. Pray tell me now, sweet maid, why you sing so eagerly and often this song, "Oh Robin, if you love me, for love's sake take me away!"

*Marion*. Noble sir, there are many reasons why: I love Robin dearly and he loves me; well has he shown me that he holds me dear; he has given me this pouch, this crook, and this knife.

*The Knight*. Tell me, did you see a bird flying over these fields?

*Marion*. Sir, I have seen any number; there are still in these thickets gold-finches and chaffinches, which sing most gaily.

*The Knight*. Now God help me, you beauty with the pretty figure, that is not what I am asking you; but did you see hereabouts near this brook, an ass?

*Marion*. That's the beast that hee-haws; I saw three of them on this road yesterday, all loaded down, going to the mill. Is that what you're asking me?

*The Knight*. At last I seem to be getting along a bit. Tell me, did you ever see a heron?

*Marion*. A heron, sir! My faith, no! I haven't seen a single one of those since Lent, when I did see one feeding near Dame Emma's. She's my grandmother — these are her ewes.

*The Knight*. Upon my word, I'm getting speechless. I never was so flouted.

*Marion*. Sir, now tell me honestly, what kind of creature is that on your hand?

*The Knight*. That is a falcon.

*Marion*. Does it eat bread?

*The Knight*. No, but good meat.

*Marion*. That creature?

*The Knight*. Look! it has a hood on its head.

*Marion*. And where are you going?

*The Knight*. Over by the brook.

*Marion*. Robin doesn't act like this — he's ever so much more gay; he can thrill the whole village when he plays on his pipe.

*The Knight*. Oh come now, sweet little shepherdess. Couldn't you love a knight?

*Marion*. Fine sir, stand back. I don't know what knights are; of all the men in the world I would love only Robin. He comes here evening and morning to see me, every day and regularly. Here he brings me his cheese: I still have some in my bosom, and a big piece of bread which he brought me at dinner time.

*The Knight*. Now tell me, sweet shepherdess, wouldn't you like to come

with me, to ride on this fine palfrey, all through this wood, into the valley over there?

*Marion.* Oh sir, take away your horse, he came near hurting me. Robin's horse doesn't prance when I follow after his cart.

*The Knight.* Shepherdess, come be my love and do what I beg of you.

*Marion.* Sir, don't come so close to me. It doesn't become you to be here. Your horse almost struck me. What is your name?

*The Knight.* Aubert.

*Marion* [*sings*]. You can spare yourself the trouble, Sir Aubert. I shall never love anybody but Robin.

*The Knight.* Not really, Shepherdess?

*Marion.* Not really, on my word.

*The Knight.* Do you mean to look down on me? I am a knight and you are a shepherdess, rejecting my prayer so loftily.

*Marion* [*sings*]. I will never love you for that. I am a little shepherdess; but I have a fine lover, well-bred and gay.

*The Knight.* Well then, shepherdess, may God give you joy of him. Since it is so, I will go on my way. Today I will not say another word to you.

*Marion* [*sings*]. Trairi, deluriau, deluriau, deluriele, trairi, deluriau, delurau, delurot.

*The Knight* [*sings*]. This morning I rode along the edge of a wood; I found a pretty shepherdess, never did king see a prettier one. Eh! trairi, deluriau, deluriau, deluriele, trairi, deluriau, delurau, delurot.

*Marion* [*sings to Robin appearing in the distance*]. Oh, Robichon, deure leure va; hasten to me, leure leure va; we'll go and be happy, leure leure va.

*Robin* [*sings in reply*]. Oh Marion, leure leure va, I'm hurrying to thee, leure leure va; we'll go and be happy, leure leure va.

[*With the meeting of Robin and Marion the first scene ends.*]

## THE FARCE OF MASTER PIERRE PATELIN

[Patelin, an unscrupulous and impecunious lawyer, has tricked a draper out of six ells of cloth. When pursued by the draper, Patelin feigns sickness at home, but the draper succeeds in reaching Patelin's bedside. After Patelin and his wife, Guilmette, have temporarily placated the draper, they conspire with a shepherd who is in the draper's service. Of this shepherd the merchant has good reason to be suspicious, for the shepherd has, for several years, been systematically killing and disposing of his employer's sheep. When the merchant arraigns the shepherd, the latter retains Patelin to defend him.]

The shepherd and his counsel agree that to every question in court the defendant shall answer only "Baa!" The famous trial scene, which occupies the remainder of the play, is given here.

A charming stage-setting for Patelin<sup>1</sup> would be the market-place of a medieval town, with backdrop in perspective, showing gabled roofs, a church tower, etc. To the left would appear the draper's shop, and in the foreground, to the right, Patelin's house. In the center would be a Gothic market-cross, with three or four steps on each of the four sides of the base. At the top of these steps facing the audience, is a niche with a stone seat for the judge.

The farce, in modern French, was performed in Paris, in 1922, at the Theatre du Vieux-Colombier, with a unique stage-setting. The stage was divided into compartments — the draper's shop on one side, Patelin's house on the other, and an easy-chair for the judge in the middle. The performance was continuous, with no fall of the curtain throughout.]

#### PATELIN BEFORE THE JUDGE

Patelin, *the Judge, the Shepherd, and the Draper*

[*The Judge enters from the back, Patelin from the right, the Draper on the left. The Shepherd is seated on the steps below the Judge's bench.*]

PATELIN. Greeting, your honor! God give you grace.

Judge. Put on your hat, sir, and take your seat.

Patelin. I am very comfortable here, thank you.

Judge. Come! Let us get to work without delay. Plaintiff?

Draper. Present! I request your Honor to wait: my lawyer has been delayed.

Judge. So much the worse for you. All right, then call the defendant.

Draper. The man is right here himself, in person. He isn't saying a word, but God knows he has something to think about!

Judge. Since you are now both in court, make your plea at once.

Draper. Your Honor, this is what I am suing him for. Out of pure charity I took in, fed, clothed, and sheltered this man here. To make a long story short, I made him my shepherd. But instead of keeping my sheep, your Honor, true as you are sitting there, he killed them, one after another; he made such a frightful slaughter of sheep and ewes that, no mistaking —

Judge. Stop. I must understand this. [*To the merchant.*] Did you pay him to work for you?

Patelin. That's right; had he kept him for sport, without hire —

<sup>1</sup> Suggested by Professor R. T. Holbrook.

*Draper* [*recognizing Patelin*]. May God reject me if it isn't he, without a doubt!

*Judge*. What makes you hold your hands up like that? Have you the toothache, Master Pierre?

*Patelin* [*pretending to press his hand against his cheek*]. They don't give me a moment's peace. I never felt such pain. I don't dare lift up my face. But never mind, go on with the case.

*Judge* [*to the draper*]. Go on.

*Draper*. It is he — no mistake. [*To Patelin*.] And by the cross of Christ you are certainly the one to whom I sold those six yards of cloth, Master Pierre!

*Judge*. What cloth is he talking about?

*Patelin* [*talking like a lawyer*]. He is in error. He is leading away from the point. He is wrong, he confuses his words. He is completely mixed up.

*Draper*. They can hang me if it isn't he.

*Patelin*. God knows what you mean.

*Draper* [*to Patelin*]. My cloth, by the bloody throat of —!

*Patelin*. What a far-fetched story the wretched man has trumped up to make out his case! The stubborn fellow means, of course, that his shepherd has sold the wool from which the cloth of my garment is made. That is, he says that the shepherd is robbing him, that he stole the wool from his sheep.

*Draper* [*to Patelin*]. Damn me if you haven't it!

*Judge* [*to draper*]. Peace! in the devil's name. You are talking nonsense. Can't you stick to your subject without delaying the Court?

*Patelin* [*aside*]. I feel such pain, and yet I must laugh. See how embarrassed he is. He doesn't know where he left the cloth. [*To the Judge*.] We must set him right again.

*Judge*. Come! Let's get back to the sheep.<sup>1</sup> What happened next?

*Draper*. He took six yards of it for nine francs.

*Judge*. Are we ninnies or fools? Where do you think you are?

*Patelin*. I think he means to pull the wool over you. You would think he was a decent fellow to look at his expression. But let me advise that his opponent be examined a bit.

*Judge*. Well said: he is familiar with the man. It must be that he could recognize him. Come here, fellow — speak.

*Shepherd*. Baa!

*Judge*. Here's a bore. What is this "baa"? Am I a goat? Answer me.

*Shepherd*. Baa!

*Judge*. Plague take you! Are you mocking us?

*Patelin*. Believe me, he is crazy or stupid, or he thinks he's still with his sheep.

*Draper*. I tell you that you are the very thief who took my cloth. Ah, your Honor, you don't know how cunning he is.

<sup>1</sup> "*Revenons à nos moutons*" — now a famous French proverb.

*Judge.* Be silent. Are you a fool? Leave that matter alone and let's get down to the point.

*Draper.* Indeed, your Honor, the case touches me closely; but on my faith I won't open my mouth about it again. Another time it may be different. I shall have to swallow it whole. Now then, to get back to my subject. As I was saying, I let him have six yards — I mean, sheep — please excuse me, your Honor! This rascal here — this shepherd, who ought to have been minding his business in the pasture — he promised me that I should have six gold crowns whenever I came for them, without any swindling or cheating. And now [*looking at Patelin*] he swears he never had the cloth and doesn't owe me the money. [*To Patelin.*] Oh, Master Pierre, truly! . . . That scoundrel knocked some of my finest beasts over the head just to get the mutton and the wool [*looking at Patelin again*]. Then he marched gaily off with my cloth under his arm, saying that I should go and get six gold crowns at his house.

*Judge.* There's neither rhyme nor reason in anything you say. What on earth are you talking about? You mix up sheep and money and cloth until I can't tell which is which.

*Patelin.* As for me, I'm pretty sure he keeps back the poor shepherd's pay all right.

*Draper* [*to Patelin*]. Oh, you — you'd better keep your mouth shut. I know well enough where the shoe pinches me. My cloth — Gee whiz! You've got it!

*Judge.* Got what?

*Draper.* You know very well, your Honor — the object of my suit.

*Judge.* No such thing.

*Patelin.* This shepherd is a fool. He can't defend himself either way, and doesn't know what to ask. If you wish, I will plead his case.

*Judge.* You plead his case? I don't think you will get much pay out of it.

*Patelin.* But really, I don't want to make anything out of it; let it be for charity. Now I am going to find out from the poor fellow whatever he is willing to tell me. Perhaps he can show me how to conduct his defense. He would have a hard time of it if nobody helped him out. [*To the Shepherd.*] Come along now, Shepherd, you understand me, don't you?

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* What Baa do you mean? By the Holy Blood, are you an idiot? Tell us your troubles now.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* What, Baa! Is it the sheep you think you're hearing? Come now, answer. It's for your own good.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* Listen to me: you've got to answer if you want anybody to help you.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* Louder, or you'll be in for it if you don't look out.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* Send him back to his sheep, your Honor. He's a natural born idiot.

*Draper.* An idiot? Saint Saviour of Asturia! He's a great deal smarter than you are.

*Patelin.* Send him back to keep his sheep. There's no point in trying to get justice for a fool.

*Draper.* Are you going to send them away before my case has been heard?

*Patelin.* Good Lord, since he is a fool, why hear him?

*Draper.* Your Honor, at least you can give me a judgment.

*Judge.* It is mere nonsense to judge between one fool and another. Listen! Fewer words! or the Court will not sit any longer.

*Draper.* What! You are not really going to let them go?

*Judge.* And why not?

*Patelin.* Let them go. Neither one of them has a grain of sense.

*Draper* [to *Patelin*]. You carried off my cloth without paying for it, you . . . Master Pierre! [To the *Judge*.] Your Honor, now you have the whole matter. I depend on you to see that I get justice.

*Patelin.* Your Honor, I demand that you order him to be silent. You're simply holding an expensive session of court for three or four old sheep who aren't worth three or four buttons.

*Draper.* It's the same old song about his sheep. It's my cloth that he took, and that he's going to give back to me.

*Judge.* Am I crazy? He will never cease braying.

*Patelin* [to the *Judge*]. Order him to stop talking. [To the *Draper*.] For God's sake, stop that old tune. Admitting that he did steal six or seven, or even a dozen sheep, and eat them, you need not be so upset about it. Haven't you made enough out of him in all the time that he has been keeping your sheep for you?

*Draper.* Look at him now, your Honor, look at him. I'm talking to him about cloth, and he answers by talking to me about sheep. Where are my six yards of cloth, I ask you, that you tucked under your arm and walked away with? Haven't you the slightest intention of giving them back to me?

*Patelin* [pathetically]. Now, your Honor, you aren't going to hang him just over six or seven woolly sheep? — Don't be so hard on a poverty-stricken shepherd who is as naked as a worm.

*Draper.* A pretty way to change the subject! The Devil made me sell cloth to such a buyer. [To the *Judge*.] Oh now, your Honor, I ask him —

*Judge* [to the *Draper*]. I forbid you to go on. This is a pretty job trying to conduct a suit with a fool. [To the *Shepherd*.] Go on back to your sheep!

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Judge* [to the *Draper*]. By our Lady, it's easy enough to see what sort of fellow you are.

*Draper.* Upon my soul, your Honor, I wish —

*Patelin.* Could anyone make him stop talking?

*Draper.* No, my business is with you. You've cheated me and carried off my cloth all by your smooth talk.

*Patelin* [*to the Judge*]. I call everyone to witness. Why do you listen to him, sir?

*Draper.* My God, you are the worst rascal! . . . Your Honor, whatever anyone may say —

*Judge.* This is getting to be a perfect farce — you two — you make nothing but noise. [*He gets up.*] It's time I was going. [*To the Shepherd.*] Begone, fellow, and never come back, even if some officer summons you. The Court acquits you; do you understand?

*Patelin* [*to the Shepherd*]. Can't you say thank you?

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Judge* [*to Shepherd*]. My goodness, don't you know enough to go when you can?

*Draper.* But is this justice for him to get off this way?

*Judge.* Yes, justice enough for fools. I have business elsewhere. Will you come out with me to supper now, Master Pierre?

*Patelin.* No, thank you, I have something to attend to.

[*The Judge goes away.*]

*Draper* [*to Patelin*]. Yes, you have got something to attend to and that is to pay me!

*Patelin.* Pay you for what? Are you crazy? Who do you think I am? By my own blood, I was wondering who you took me for.

*Draper.* Bah!

*Patelin.* Now, my fine fellow, you just hold on. I'll tell you right now who it is you take me for. You take me for a fool. But see! one of the fools wouldn't be bald, as I am, on top of my head.

*Draper.* Do you take me for a blockhead? I know it's you, as well as anything. I know your voice. You can't fool me.

*Patelin.* Might it not be Messire Jehan de Noyon?<sup>2</sup> He looks like me around the waist.

*Draper.* No he doesn't, either. He hasn't a deceitful face like yours, nor so dull. And how could I have left him sick in your house only a little while ago?

*Patelin.* Sick? what sickness? Come now, drop your joke. Everybody sees through you.

*Draper.* It certainly is you. I call Saint Peter to witness. I know you perfectly well.

*Patelin.* Then think no more of it, for certainly it is not I who ever took from you a yard or even a half yard. I'm not that kind of fellow.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly the name of one of the court fools.

*Draper.* Then I'll go and look in your house. By the Holy Blood I'll just see whether you're there or not. If I do find you there, we shan't have to worry our heads over it any more here.

*Patelin.* By our Lady, now you have it; that's the way to find out.

[*The Draper goes out.*]

*Patelin.* Say, Lambkin, didn't I plead your case well?

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* Oh, come on now, that's enough. You don't have to say Baa any longer. It's all over. Didn't I give it to him, though? Didn't I counsel you just right?

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* Good heavens! Nobody will hear you. Speak out, don't be afraid.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* I've got to be going now. Aren't you going to pay me?

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* To tell the truth, you did your part very well. The way you kept from laughing was what fooled him.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* Stop saying Baa. Pay me now and be quick about it.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* What impudence is this? What do you think you're going to do? By my word, you will pay me, or you won't know what's happened to you — do you understand? Hand over the money.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* You're joking. [*To himself.*] What? is this all I get out of it?

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* You are rhyming, but this is prose. Do you take me for a green-horn? Do you realize who I am? Now don't baa me any more baas, but pay me.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* Am I not going to get anything out of this? What sort of game do you think you're playing? And I was to take such pride in you. Now let me be proud of you.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* Are you making me eat goose? Great Scott! Have I lived as long as this only to have a shepherd, a dressed-up sheep, a country clodhopper try to play a joke on me?

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* Can't I get another word out of you? If you're just doing it to be funny, say so. Let's call it off. Come on and have supper with me at my house.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* By Saint John, I begin to see the point. The goslings are leading the goose to pasture! [*To himself.*] I thought I could get the better of any-

body, here or elsewhere — even the toughest rascals, and those who don't get what's coming to them until the day of judgment — but now a mere shepherd is leaving me behind. [*He turns and sees the shepherd running away.*] By Saint James! if I could find an officer, I'd have you nabbed.

*Shepherd.* Baa!

*Patelin.* Hang me if I don't see a policeman coming. I'll fix him if he doesn't put you in the lockup.

*Shepherd* [*disappearing*]. If he can catch me, I'll pardon him!

## MEDIEVAL IRISH LITERATURE

VAST in extent and rich in its content of widely diversified materials, the domain of Medieval Irish Literature spreads itself before one's gaze. Herein is matter of every description: sermons and ecclesiastical writings wholly religious in tone; saints' lives — in which fiction plays the major rôle; legal, scientific, and other scholarly treatises; and an enormous mass of poetry, legend, satire, and fantastic lore, testifying abundantly to the artistic ability and the virile imagination of the ancient Irish story-teller and poet. Although some of this matter is tiresome and worthless, a large amount of it is highly artistic and possessed of rare beauty. Here one finds legends of Lir [Llyr], the Irish Neptune, and Manannan, his son; of the Dagda, the great god of the supernatural people, the Tuatha De Danann, who live in the fairy-mounds; of Angus, the Adonis of this Irish pantheon; of Lug, and Nuada, and Midir, the "Very Proud One," who lived in the *sidh* [fairy-knoll] of Bri Leith; of Anu, the mother of the gods; and of the Morrigan, and the Badb, and Macha, terrible battle-goddesses or demons who appear not infrequently in the form of ravens. Here also may be found gory tales reflecting a fierce barbaric splendor which concern cattle-raids, the taking of heads, deadly combats between chariot-borne heroes, violent deaths, and the exploits of heathen champions who swear "by the gods of my people." Yet other tales are milder in tone and there appear stories of hunting expeditions; of voyages replete with wonderful happenings, and of miraculous visits to the Other World; of enchantments; of wooings; and of elopements. Nor is the element of humor lacking. Even in grim stories of bloodshed and carnage this sense in the author is often apparent, and, indeed, in one barbaric tale, 'The Story of Mac Dathó's Pig,' the element of humor is an outstanding feature. In satire, likewise, such as 'The Vision of Mac Conglinne,' a broad — often crude and inartistic — humor is employed. In sharp contrast to these tales of broad humor and savage exploits stands a group of legends and poems, delicate, beautiful, and possessing a high degree of artistic excellence. Here, couched in prose as well as in verse, one finds wonderful descriptions of nature; the landscape, with its trees, buds, and flowers; the sea, the wind, and the white spray on the billows; the weird call of the crane over the dreary moors; the chill rain and snow of the bleak winter; and the joyous season of summer, with the twittering birds, the hum of the bees, and the flowers bursting into bloom. Truly the Old Irish poet caught and, in his elaborate system of rhymes and meters, portrayed Nature in her varying moods and aspects. Here also are legends of adventures in wonderful fairy

palaces, descriptions of delicate and beautiful fairy women, and tales recounting the loves of fairy maidens and mortal heroes. Nor was pathos lacking in the works of these ancient artists. Seldom does one find a more touching passage than that depicting the grief of Credhe as she voices her woe over her dead lover, Cael, or that in which Deirdre laments the slain Naisi.

Small wonder that in later years Ireland produced illustrious poets, gifted story-tellers, and able men of letters. A knowledge of the literary glories of the past was sufficient stimulus to these men, and the blood of the ancient *fili*, with his appreciation of the beautiful, his sense of humor, his love of story, and his untrammelled imagination, still flows in Irish veins.

Although much of the lore noted above undoubtedly existed in Irish tradition long before the coming of Christianity to Ireland, the establishment of the Irish Church seems a fitting point at which to begin a survey of ancient Irish literature. According to tradition, Christianity was introduced into the island by Saint Patrick in 432, although it appears probable that he was not the first missionary to carry the Gospel there. Declan, Ailbe, and Ciaran have come down to us as the names of teachers of Christianity in Ireland in pre-Patrician times, and Prosper of Aquitaine records that Pope Celestine sent Palladius as first Bishop to the Scots<sup>1</sup> in 431, though for some reason it seems that Palladius did not remain long in Ireland, since in the following year Saint Patrick came to take his place.

Whatever may have been the opposition encountered from the High King, the Irish chieftains, and the powerful druids, it appears certain that the work of Saint Patrick and his associates was highly successful; the establishment of the church at Armagh and that of Saint Brigit at Kildare are evidences of the effectiveness of the labors of these Christian pioneers. Yet, after the death of Saint Patrick, there seems to have been a slipping back into old customs, and the new faith came upon evil days. In 520, however, Saint Findian (a name also spelled Finnian or Finnen), educated by Saint David, Gildas, and Cadoc in Wales, founded the monastery at Clonard, and gave new life to the languishing Irish Church. From this famous school came the twelve apostles of Ireland, who established seats of Christian learning at various places, among which may be mentioned Moville by another Saint Findian in 540; Clonmacnois by Saint Kieran (or Ciaran) in 541; Derry by Saint Columba in 546; and Bangor (County Down) by Saint Comgall in 558. In 563 Saint Columba also established the monastery at Hi (Iona), from which went forth Aidan, the apostle of England.

During the next three centuries Ireland was the seat of a remarkable intellectual activity, and great monastic universities grew up in which both sacred and profane learning attained a high state of development. From these schools,

<sup>1</sup> Until the eleventh century both the native Irish and those who migrated from Ireland to northern Britain (now Scotland), as well as the descendants of such immigrants, were called "Scots."

Irish scholars went forth to the Continent, and to these schools came students from England and more distant lands. In these seats of learning, painstaking scribes laboriously copied long Latin passages from the Gospels and other ecclesiastical works; and the infinite detail and beautiful colorings of the letters in the famous 'Book of Kells,' a manuscript of the eighth or ninth century, and the 'Book of Durrow,' of the seventh or eighth century, both preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, testify abundantly to the patience and artistry of the monks in those early times.

With the beginning of the ninth century, however, came the Vikings. Indeed, it is recorded that as early as 795 Norse invaders pillaged and burned the church at Rechru, an island north of Dublin Bay; and before the middle of the ninth century they had visited almost every part of Ireland, pillaging monasteries, taking captives, and leaving destruction in their wake. Nor did this Norse invasion consist of mere raiding visits. Before the middle of the ninth century the Viking forces seem to have been united under Turgeis, possibly the Norse Thorgil, who established a seat at Armagh, and during whose life the cities of Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford were established. In 848 the Danes arrived, and for several years these newcomers contended with the Norwegians for the city of Dublin; but when, about the middle of the century, Amlaib, son of the King of Norway, became King of the Norsemen in Ireland, Dublin seems to have been made the seat of authority over other Viking settlements in Ireland.

In this invasion churches and church schools — doubtless because of the many gold and silver objects they contained — seem to have been marked objects for pillage and destruction. It is recorded that Ota, the wife of Turgeis, profaned the church at Clonmacnois with pagan rites, and that the monastery at Armagh was destroyed as many as ten times. Such conditions obtained elsewhere throughout the island, and, without doubt, not only were great numbers of precious relics and books destroyed, but the lives of all connected with ecclesiastical establishments were exposed to constant danger.

It was not strange that, during these years, many Irish scholars fled to the Continent, taking their books with them; nor is it inexplicable that in Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, and other European countries — especially in those places lying along the great pilgrimage routes to Rome — manuscripts come to light which contain not only Latin texts glossed with Irish words, but also passages of greater or less length written in the Irish language.

The Norse invasion may account in part for the paucity of ancient manuscripts in Ireland. Yet, famous as are the books of Kells and Durrow, as well as the other early manuscripts existent in Ireland and England, they are relatively unimportant in the study of Irish literature, since, for the most part, they are ecclesiastical works written in Latin. The same may be said of the manuscripts preserved in libraries of the Continent, among the most important of which are the Codex Paulinus at Würzburg, the Codex Ambrosianus at

Milan, and the Codex Sangallensis at Saint-Gall in Switzerland. Although the Irish portions of these Continental manuscripts, which date from the beginning of the eighth to the middle of the ninth century, are in large measure restricted to glosses on the Latin texts, certain Irish passages, both prose and verse, are entirely different in nature. Indeed, a second Saint-Gall codex of the ninth century contains a number of Irish incantations against certain injuries, thorn, headache, and the like; and another manuscript of the same period, preserved in the monastery of Saint Paul, in Carinthia, contains not only an obscure charm, but also a humorous poem concerning a clerical scribe and his cat, Pangur Ban, as well as a poem ascribed to Suibne Geilt (d. 637) and certain verses ascribed to Saint Moling (d. 697).

As has been indicated above, ancient Irish manuscripts preserved in the libraries of Ireland and England are few in number, and are almost exclusively of a religious nature. The same may not be said of the great mass of Irish manuscripts belonging to the period between 1100 and 1500. Those of an ecclesiastical, legal, historical, or professional nature may for present purposes be passed over for the more important collections of the period which contain imaginative literature.

Whatever may have been the cause, whether relief from the early fury of the Viking invasion, fear of "the destructive effects of the Norman wars," or "just pride in the literary remains of their race," before the beginning of the twelfth century, ambitious scribes, both clerical and secular, had, in the words of Miss Eleanor Hull, begun "to collect in large vellum books the old stories, genealogies, historic tales, and poems which had been repeated among the people, and which were probably dying out amid the inrush of new ideas and customs." Some idea of the amount of this manuscript material may be gained from rather general estimates that, if the five oldest of these manuscripts were printed, they would make about 9400 quarto pages; that vellum manuscripts which might be dated between 1300 and 1600 would fill another 9000 quarto pages; and that the paper manuscripts in the libraries of Trinity College, Dublin, and the Royal Irish Academy, belonging for the most part to the beginning of the eighteenth century, would make 30,000 more. In his 'Essai d'un Catalogue de la Littérature Épique de l'Irlande,' d'Arbois de Jubainville mentions 953 Irish manuscripts containing epic matter preserved in Irish and English libraries, of which 133 were written before 1600. A description of one of these old collections will give some idea of their character.

The most ancient of the large books containing Irish romances is the 'Lebor na h-Uidre' [Book of the Dun (Cow)], which consists of 134 folio pages written on very old vellum, and is said to have been compiled at the monastery of Clonmacnois during the latter part of the eleventh century. An entry on page 37 reads as follows: "Pray for Moelmuiri, the son of Ceilechar, that is, the son of the son of Conn na m-Bocht, who wrote and collected this book

from various books. Pray for Domnall, the son of Muirheartach, son of Domnall, son of Tadhg, son of Brian, son of Aindrias, son of Brian Luighnech, son of Toirdealbach Mor. It was this Domnall that directed the renewal (of the name) of the person who wrote this beautiful book, by Sigraird O'Cuirrdin; and is it not as well for us to leave our blessing with the owner of this book, as to send it to him by the mouth of any other person? . . ." The 'Annals of the Four Masters' records that, in 1106 A.D., "Maolmuire, son of the son of Conn na m-Bocht, was killed in the middle of the great stone church at Cluain Mic Nois, by a party of robbers." Various types of literature make up the contents of the book, and pieces widely differing in character follow each other with almost no indication of where the one begins and the other ends. The first leaf contains a fragment of the 'Leabhar Gabhala' [Book of Invasions], a story giving an account of the various peoples who invaded Ireland in prehistoric times. Pages 3-4 are made up of two fragments from the Irish version of the history of Nennius; and pages 5-15 contain the historic part of the Introduction to 'Amra Choluim Chille,' an elegy on the death of Saint Columba or Colum Cille. Then follow a poem of eight verses attributed to Saint Columba; an anonymous poem of forty verses imploring the spiritual protection of Saint Columba; part of the 'Story of Tuan, son of Cairill, to Finnen of Magh Bile,' a prose and metrical account of the early colonizations of Ireland which Tuan, existing successively in the forms of a stag, a salmon, a wolf, etc., was privileged to observe; an ancient religious legend describing the condition of Enoch and Elijah in Heaven; a short fragment of the 'Mesca Ulad' [Inebriety of the Ultonians]; etc. The remaining 114 pages of the book contain a large number of compositions of diversified nature — religious, semi-historical, legendary, and romantic, among which may be mentioned: 'Fis Adamnain' [Adamnan's Vision], which describes a visit to Heaven and Hell; a fragment of the 'Imram Curaig Maelduin,' a romantic tale of the voyage of Maelduin's boat and the wonderful experiences of the voyagers; 'Scela Lai Bratha' [Story of the Day of Judgment]; 'Fotha Catha Cnucha' [Causes of the Battle of Cnucha], a story belonging to the Finn Cycle; a long poem by Cinaed ua h-Artacain (d. 975) on the 'Burial Places of the Kings'; an account of the causes which led to the expulsion of the people called Desi; 'Togail Bruidne Da Dergae' [Destruction of the Court of Da Derga]; 'Fled Bricrend' [Feast of Bricriu]; a fragment of a story concerning Midir's wooing of Etain, a tale belonging to the Mythological Cycle; 'Scel Mongain' [Story of Mongan]; an incomplete version of the 'Tain bo Cualnge' [Cattle-Raid of Cooley]; and a number of legends more or less closely connected with this great Ultonian epic. Of these old books the next in importance is probably the 'Book of Leinster,' which dates from about the middle of the twelfth century. This consists of more than 400 pages and, beginning with the 'Book of Invasions,' contains poems on the wars of the men of Ulster, Leinster, and Munster; an ancient Grammar and Prosody;

a tract on the Ogham alphabet; prose and verse versions of the 'Dindsenchus' on the legendary history associated with Irish topography; an adaptation of the story of the siege of Troy; the book of reciprocal rights and tributes of the monarch and provincial kings; and much other matter — genealogical, ecclesiastical, and historical, to say nothing of a great number of legends and stories, many of which have already been mentioned as contained in the 'Book of the Dun Cow.' The 'Book of Leinster,' however, contains a number of romances not found in the older collection, among which may be cited the 'Boromha Laighean' [Boromhean Tribute]; the 'Scel Mucci Mic Dathó' [Story of Mac Dathó's Pig]; and the 'Aided Mac n-Usnig' [Tragic Death of the Sons of Usnech]. The 'Leabhar Breac' [Speckled Book], much of which was compiled before the middle of the sixteenth century, consists largely of ecclesiastical matter written in Latin. In addition to much religious matter — saints' lives, ancient litanies, monastic rules, canons, etc., it contains the classical story of Alexander the Great, and a copy of 'Cormac's Glossary.'

Other books of similar character are the 'Yellow Book of Lecan,' the 'Book of Ballymote,' the 'Great Book of Lecan,' the 'Book of Lismore,' and the 'Book of Fermoy,' all large manuscripts containing diversified texts, some of which are of great antiquity.

In connection with these old books, it should be remembered that the date of compilation means little. The scribe, in all probability, not only copied texts which had been written centuries before, but also inserted matter which may have been composed by himself or his contemporaries. Furthermore, centuries after the original compilation of the book, entries of various kinds continued to be made. These manuscripts, therefore, really partake of the nature of libraries, in which the most diversified texts of different ages follow one another indiscriminately.

An inquiry concerning the source of the many romances which make up so large a part of these old books leads one back to the ancient Irish professional literary man. Whatever may have been the relationship in very early times between the *fili* and the druid, it seems clear that at a later period the *fili* acted in three capacities, *viz.*, as story-teller, poet, and judge. Furthermore, the *fili* was not only thought to have the power to perform certain magic rites, but also was believed to be able, through the medium of satirical verse, to produce blemishes upon the face of the person whom he satirized. The poet, or *fili*, therefore, was a powerful and much respected individual. His course of training was said to cover a period of twelve years, at the end of which the candidate was supposed to have made himself proficient not only in the legal, historical, and legendary lore of his country, but also in certain complicated Irish meters, Ogham writing, etc. A passage from the 'Book of Leinster' gives some notion of the various ranks of the ancient Irish literary man, and also furnishes an idea of the number and kinds of stories which each of these

ranks were said to be able to relate. The passage, as translated by Eugene O'Curry, runs thus: "Of the qualifications of a poet in stories and in deeds to be related to kings and chiefs, as follows, *viz.*: seven times fifty stories, *i. e.*, five times fifty prime stories and twice fifty secondary stories; and these secondary stories are not permitted (that is, can only be permitted) but to four grades only, *viz.*, an Ollamh, an Anrath, a Cli, and a Cano. And these prime stories are Destructions and Preyings, Courtships, Battles, Caves, Navigations, Tragedies (or Deaths), Expeditions, Elopements, and Conflagrations." To this list are added several other types of legend which are also reckoned prime stories: Irruptions, Visions, Loves, Hostings, and Migrations; and the 'Book of Leinster' supplies the titles of 187 of these tales, sixty-eight of which have been preserved more or less complete. An inferior type of Irish poet, the bard, was frequently attached to the household of some petty chief. Like the *fili*, the bard underwent a severe course of training, and also, as in the case of the *fili*, bards were divided into various ranks or grades.

The way in which these stories first came to be written down is not altogether clear; but it appears more likely that in many cases the *fili*, having learned how to read and write, made texts of tales known to him than that monastic scribes asked the poets to relate their legends so that they might be written down. There is also reason to believe that the relationship between the *fili* and the monastic scholar was not a distant one, so that not only would it have been easy for the *fili* to acquire the art of reading and writing, but the clerical scribe might with equal facility have become acquainted with the legends of the poet. In later years monastic scholars and secular scribes, in making their great compilations, drew upon every ancient text they could find. Although in many instances the compiler undoubtedly made a slavish copy of his original, it seems clear that in some cases he not only altered the form and substance of the primitive texts, but inserted in his book whatever came to his attention, whether ancient or contemporary, oral or written.

In addition to two well-defined cycles of legends, the Ulster or Cuchulinn Cycle, and the Leinster or Finn Cycle, medieval Irish romance as preserved in these old books contains a number of tales dealing with mythological personages and events; and it likewise includes a group of legends concerning ancient Irish kings, as well as a number of stories apparently unconnected with the foregoing cycles or tales. Furthermore, although it has seemed advisable to omit allusion to texts of a religious or historical nature, certain of these compositions are so interwoven with romance material that they may well find a place in this treatment.

Of the two great saga-cycles, that of Cuchulinn, or the Red Branch, is probably the more important. It concerns the exploits of the Champions of the Red Branch, so named from one of the great halls in which these warriors were accustomed to assemble, and consists of a hundred or more legends, all in some measure connected with the great central epic, the 'Tain bo Cualnge'

[Cattle-Raid of Cooley], a long prose composition, a version of which was probably committed to writing as early as the seventh or eighth century. The most important texts of the 'Tain' are those preserved in the 'Book of the Dun Cow,' the 'Book of Leinster,' and the 'Yellow Book of Lecan,' in which, as in the Irish epic generally, verse passages of varying length are inserted in the prose. These poems may be recapitulations of narrative or descriptive portions, laments, eulogies, etc., and many of them may not be much older than the manuscript in which they are preserved. In fact, it appears probable that in the period between the eighth and twelfth centuries the story was greatly modified and elaborated, and that these modified versions form the bases of the texts we now possess. Testimony for this is supplied by the facts that the oldest text, the 'Book of the Dun Cow,' does not contain the account of the fight between Cuchulinn and Ferdiad, and that the prose portions of the version in the 'Book of Leinster' show conscious literary effort.

The action of the 'Tain' is laid in the first century of the Christian era. According to the story, Conchobar mac Nessa was King of Ulster, and Ailill and Medb were King and Queen of Connaught. Medb was the owner of a famous bull, the *Findbennach* [Whitehorned], which, prior to its existence in the form of a bull, had existed in a number of shapes: a swineherd, a raven, a sea-monster, a specter, etc. An equally famous "dun bull of Cooley" [*Dond Cualnge*], which had gone through similar metamorphoses and which had long contended against the *Findbennach*, was owned by a man in Ulster. Medb, desirous of possessing the *Dond Cualnge*, decided upon a foray into Ulster, to take place at a time when the Ulstermen were in a state of debility which had resulted from a curse laid upon them by a fairy woman. Through various inducements, including the beauty of her daughter Finnabair — undoubtedly related to the Guinevere of Arthurian romance — Medb collected her army, drawn from all parts of Ireland, and set forth on her expedition, directed and advised by the great Fergus mac Roich, rightful King of Ulster, foster-father of Cuchulinn, and hero of the Red Branch, who had been dispossessed by Conchobar and was now in exile in Connaught. The beardless youth Cuchulinn, however, was exempt from the debility, and single-handed resisted the invasion. Thereupon followed a series of single combats between Cuchulinn and heroes of Medb's army, including the famous duel between Cuchulinn and his friend Ferdiad and the pretended duel between Cuchulinn and Fergus. Eventually the Ultonians recovered from their debility, Medb's army was routed, and the two bulls destroyed each other in a terrific combat. Intimately connected with the 'Tain' are a number of legends known as *remscela* [foretales]. One of these, 'The Revealing of the "Tain,"' relates that when, during the seventh century, the story of the 'Tain' was lost, two prominent poets went to the tomb of Fergus mac Roich, who appeared as a spirit, and, in the course of three days, recited the tale to them from beginning to end. Three short stories, 'The Cattle-Raid of Dartada,' 'The Cattle-Raid of Flidais,'

and 'The Cattle-Raid of Regamon,' record the efforts of Medb to secure cattle for her great expedition. The 'Tain bo Fraich' [Cattle-Raid of Fraech] gives an account of the wooing of Finnabair by Fraech, a young prince, and the consent of Medb to the wooing of her daughter on condition that Fraech aid in the foray into Ulster. The 'Cess Ulad' [Debility of the Ultonians] concerns the strange incapacity which came upon the men of Ulster, and the 'Tain bo Regamna' records the coming of the Morrighu, a war-goddess, who, in the form of a scald-crow, appears to Cuchulinn, warning him of her own evil intentions against him and of his early death. Finally, the 'Cophur in da Muccida' [Begetting of the Two Swineherds] tells of the metamorphoses through which the two bulls have passed; and the "birth-stories" (*compert*) of Conchobar and Cuchulinn record the unusual circumstances relating to the nativity of these heroes. Among other tales connected with the 'Tain' may be mentioned the 'Brislech mor Maigh Murthemne' [Great Rout of the Plain of Muirthemne], which concerns the events which brought about Cuchulinn's death; the 'Aided Conculaind' [Death of Cuchulinn]; the 'Derg Ruathar Chonaill Chearnaig' [Red Rout of Conall Cernach], a story describing Conall Cernach's revenge for the death of Cuchulinn; the 'Tochmarc Emire' [Wooing of Emer], which tells of Cuchulinn's wooing of his wife, Emer, and his course of instruction in arms by the Scottish sorceress Scathach; 'The Deaths of Ailill, Medb, and Conall Cernach'; 'The Death of Conchobar'; and a number of other legends. At least two of these latter should be noted in passing. The 'Serglige Conculaind' [Sickbed of Cuchulinn], in which Cuchulinn is lured away to fairyland by Fand, wife of Manannan, partakes of the nature of the group of legends sometimes treated as the Mythological Cycle. The other story, 'Aided Conlaich' [Tragic Death of Aife's Only (Son), or Tragic Death of Conlaech], is very similar to the Persian story of Sohrab and Rustam. Conlaech, Cuchulinn's son by Aife, daughter of Scathach, came to Ireland to seek his father, but, refusing to disclose his name, he fought and was killed by Cuchulinn, who afterward recognized his son by a ring which he had given to the boy's mother. Less closely connected with the 'Tain,' but belonging to the Ulster Cycle, are three legends which likewise merit attention in this outline. The first of these, the 'Scel Mucci Mic Dathó' [Story of Mac Dathó's Pig] concerns a controversy between certain heroes of Ulster and Connaught as to who, on account of his valor, should receive the "champion's portion." The contest finally lay between Conall Cernach of Ulster and Ket mac Matach of Connaught, who boasted of the exploits of his brother Anluan; but Conall produced the head of Anluan, and claimed the "portion." The second tale, the 'Fled Bricrend' [Feast of Bricriu], is, after the 'Tain,' the longest saga belonging to the Ulster Cycle. Among the Red Branch heroes, Bricriu plays the rôle of trouble-maker. Having built a large banqueting hall, he invited the Ulstermen to a feast, where, in turn, he incited Cuchulinn, Conall Cernach,

and Loigaire Buadach to claim the "champion's portion." This saga is of peculiar interest to students of English and medieval romance since it contains the beheading episode found also in the story of 'Gawain and the Green Knight.' The third story, the 'Aided Mac n-Usnig' [Tragic Death of the Sons of Usnech], is, perhaps, the best known of all the ancient Irish romances. A version of it is found in the 'Book of Leinster'; it is preserved in the oral tradition of Ireland and Scotland to the present day; some recension formed the basis of Macpherson's 'Darthula'; and literary adaptations of the story under the title 'Deirdre' have appeared in recent times, notably in the 'Poems' of Sir Samuel Ferguson, by Robert D. Joyce in his 'Deirdre,' and by the anonymous author (really Angus Smith) of 'Loch Etive and the Sons of Usnach.'

Generally speaking, the tales of the Ulster Cycle reflect a very ancient stratum of social life. They deal for the most part with war, single combats, feastings, and barbaric exploits; the heroes fight from chariots, and proudly display the heads of vanquished enemies. Throughout the cycle the druid plays an important rôle; the heroes swear "by the gods of my people"; and such writing as is mentioned is said to be done in Ogham characters.

Standing in sharp contrast to the Ulster Cycle is the saga of Finn, sometimes called the Leinster, Ossianic, or Finn Cycle. Legends of this group concern events said to have taken place in the second and third century A.D. during the kingships of Conn Cetcathach, Cormac mac Áirt, and Cairbre Liffechair, and, for the most part, center about members of a *fian*, or band of professional warriors, who appear to have been independent of the monarchy of Tara and to have almost entirely occupied themselves in war and hunting. Cumall, the father of Finn, had been the leader of the *fiana* of Leinster, but in the battle of Cnucha, which Cumall waged against Conn, the High King,<sup>2</sup> Cumall was slain by Goll mac Morna, the leader of the *fiana* of Connaught, on the very day that Finn, the son of Cumall, was born. With the death of Cumall, Goll assumed the chieftaincy of the *fiana* of Erin, and throughout his early life the youthful Finn was in danger of destruction at the hands of the sons of Morna. Later, Finn wrested the leadership from Goll, and for many years held the chieftaincy of the *fiana*, fighting many battles and experiencing many adventures until, opposing the High King Cairbre Liffechair, his power was broken in the battle of Gabhra.

Among the outstanding figures of the Finn Cycle may be mentioned, first of all, Finn mac Cumall, the poet, wizard, chieftain, and redoubtable warrior; Goll mac Morna, the powerful and fearless leader of the Clann Morna; Conan the Bald, braggart and trouble-maker, a member of the Clann Morna;

<sup>2</sup> Ireland was divided into five great provinces (Leinster, East and West Munster, Connaught, and Ulster), and these were subdivided. Over each division and subdivision was a king (*ri*), and over all was a "high king" (*ardri*), who was elected to office, and who, until the sixth century, had his seat at Tara.

Oisín, son of Finn and member of Finn's *fian*, who in the later ballads became the traditional bard of Ireland and Scotland, and who is reputed to have lived to regale Saint Patrick with tales of the *fiana*; Cailte mac Ronan, a warrior and member of Finn's *fian*, who survived with Oisín until the time of Saint Patrick; Oscar, the son of Oisín, perhaps the best of the warriors after Finn; and, finally, Diarmaid O'Duibhne, one of the bravest and handsomest of Finn's warriors, who was possessed of a "beauty spot" which caused all women to fall in love with him. As has been indicated above, stories of Cuchulinn and of the Red Branch heroes occupy considerable space in the ancient 'Book of the Dun Cow' and 'Book of Leinster'; but the same cannot be said for tales belonging to the Cycle of Finn, for of the 134 pages contained in the 'Book of the Dun Cow' only a half-dozen deal with Finn, as against 58 with Cuchulinn, and, similarly, in the 'Book of Leinster,' the Ulster Cycle occupies 100 pages, and the Finn Cycle only 25. In later manuscripts, however, such as the fifteenth-century 'Book of Lismore,' the case is reversed, and the pages devoted to stories of Finn far outnumber those containing legends relating to the Ulster Cycle. Apparently, the Ulster Cycle had ceased to develop before the beginning of the twelfth century, while the Cycle of Finn experienced a luxuriant growth during the ensuing period. The Ulster Cycle, as has been noted above, consists almost exclusively of prose romances, whereas the Finn Cycle is represented in its earliest form not only by prose tales, but by narratives in ballad form. With the growth of the saga in the six hundred years following the twelfth century, legends of all kinds sprang up in the greatest profusion, appearing as prose tales, ballads, dialogues, and frame-stories, though the predominant form was the ballad, which was frequently attributed to Oisín. Moreover, certain stories of Finn which developed after the twelfth century not only show Norse influence, but give evidence of other contacts with the outer world; and we find tales in which Finn and Goll mac Morna contend against the men of Lochlann (the Norse invaders), as well as some containing elements drawn from Oriental and other sources. Furthermore, prior to the beginning of the fifteenth century, ballads which belong to the Finn Cycle and which were attributed to "Ossian" the son of Finn, as well as certain tales belonging to the Ulster Cycle, were current in the Highlands of Scotland; and these ballads and legends, some of which had been written down in late manuscripts, furnished the starting point for Macpherson's "Ossian."

Although a great number of ballads and tales belonging to the Finn Cycle developed between the fifteenth and eighteenth century, the idea that the saga of Finn is a comparatively recent group of legends does not seem to be justified by the facts at hand. As we have just seen, the Finn Cycle, when compared with that of Cuchulinn, occupies but a small space in the 'Book of the Dun Cow' and the 'Book of Leinster'; but the fact that stories of Finn do not appear in the ancient collections is no evidence that the tales were not extant

centuries before these volumes were compiled. Indeed, although the story of Diarmaid and Grainne is preserved only in very late manuscripts, allusions to it in the commentary on the 'Amra Choluim Chille' and in the 'Senchus Mor' (the codification of ancient Irish law) testify to the existence of some version of it as early as the tenth century. Furthermore, not only may a number of tales regarding Finn be dated prior to the twelfth century, but the twelfth-century poet Gilla in Chomded states that there were no less than one hundred and twenty stories relating to the *fiana* which every important *fili* could recite.

The most ancient texts belonging to the Finn Cycle are several prose tales which go back to the ninth, or possibly the eighth, century and a poem or two attributed to Finn which may have been written as early as the tenth century. One of these prose tales, 'Finn and the Phantoms,' concerns Finn's adventures with a group of uncanny beings, while two others purport to explain the origin of his "thumb of knowledge." The poems concern the subjects of summer and winter, respectively. Other poems attributed to Finn, Oisín, Cailte, and Fergus Finnbel are assuredly as old as the eleventh century, while certain passages in 'Cormac's Glossary' testify that legends of Finn were current as early as 908, the traditional date of the death of the author of that work. The 'Fotha Catha Cnucha' [Causes of the Battle of Cnucha], consisting of prose and verse passages, describes the death of Finn's father, Cumall, and is probably as old as the tenth century. Among the early compositions belonging to the Finn Cycle, the 'Acallam na Senorach' [Colloquy of the Ancients], which is plausibly assigned to the beginning of the thirteenth century, is the most extensive. This is a long frame-story composed of a great number of legends about Finn and the *fiana*, including combats, hunting exploits, adventures with fairy folk, etc., related to Saint Patrick first by Cailte and then by Oisín. Of equal antiquity, although preserved in a fifteenth-century manuscript, is a long prose tale, the 'Macgnimártha Finn' [Youthful Exploits of Finn]. This story, which gives an account of Finn's birth and infancy, his childish hunting adventures and combats, and his deeds of early manhood, has its counterpart in a similar tale regarding Cuchulinn, the 'Macgnimrada Conculaind.' Although certain scholars have held that this legend of Finn was made in imitation of that of Cuchulinn, the evidence seems insufficient to establish such a conclusion with any degree of surety. Among other prose tales belonging to the Finn Cycle, most of which, in their present form, seem to date between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century, may be mentioned the 'Toraigeacht Dhiarmuda agus Ghraíne' [Pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne], a version of which, as has been noted above, was extant as early as the tenth century; the 'Aided Find' [Death of Finn]; and the 'Cath Gabhra' [Battle of Gabhra], all of which were extant in some form at a very early date. The 'Pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne' records that Finn, when an old man, sought to espouse Grainne, daughter of

the High King Cormac mac Airt; but, after having seen her proposed husband, who was older than her father, Grainne put Diarmaid O'Duibhne under *geasa*, druidical bonds which no true hero could disobey, to elope with her. Diarmaid, although unwilling, was obliged to accede, and the remainder of the tale tells of Finn's savage pursuit of the pair, as well as of his treachery in bringing about the death of Diarmaid. The 'Battle of Gabhra,' of which there are both prose and poetical versions, concerns the fierce fight in which Cairbre, High King of Ireland, destroyed the power of Finn's *fian*, and in which Oscar, son of Oisín and grandson of Finn, was slain. Other prose romances seem to be relatively late compositions, among which may be cited: the 'Cath Finntraga' [Battle of Ventry], which describes a protracted conflict between the forces of a number of foreign kings on the one hand, and the fairy people and the *fian* of Finn on the other; the 'Toraigeacht in Ghilla Dhecair' [Pursuit of the Gilla Decair], a fanciful tale concerning a grotesque personage of the foregoing name; the 'Feis Tighe Chonain Chinn-Shleibhe' [Feast in the House of Conan of Ceann Sleibhe], a frame-story constructed by fitting together legends of varying ages.

Taken as a whole, legends of the Finn Cycle are very different in character from those which constitute the Cycle of the "Red Branch." Stories of the Ulster Cycle, as has been noted above, concern cattle-raids, fighting from chariots, single combats at fords, the taking of heads, feastings in great halls, etc. — tales reflecting a fierce, barbaric splendor. The Finn Cycle knows nothing of cattle-raids, of duels to the death as mere proofs of personal valor, or of fighting from chariots. In fact, the horse, which plays such an important part in the Ulster Cycle, seldom appears in the Cycle of Finn, which is made up, for the most part, of tales of hunting, of adventures with fairy folk, of wars against foreign invaders, of conflicts between armed forces of hereditary enemies, and of exploits of a supernatural character. In short, the whole general atmosphere of the Cycle of Finn is very different from that of the group of tales included in the Red Branch Cycle and points toward a conclusion that the two sets of tales may have originated among different peoples.

A third group of tales belonging to medieval Irish literature has been termed the "Mythological" Cycle. Events recorded in these legends take place long before the beginning of the Christian era and concern a group of supernatural beings who not infrequently play a part in stories belonging to other cycles. Prominent among the characters of this cycle is Manannan mac Lir, frequently termed "the Irish Neptune," who is reputed to be the King of the Land of Promise or of Mag Mell [Honey Plain]; and both Manannan and his father, Lir [Llyr], play important parts in Welsh romance; as, indeed, do other children of Llyr, notably Bran and Branwen. Bran also appears in Irish legend, and Llyr seems ultimately to have become the King Lear of Shakespeare. Other characters are Nuada of the Silver Hand, King of the

Tuatha de Danann;<sup>3</sup> Diancecht, the "sage of leechcraft"; the Dagda Mor, an enormous and rather grotesque personage, whose powers were so great that even the Tuatha de Danann worshiped him as a god; Goibniu, the smith; "Balor of the Evil Eye"; Lugh of the brilliant countenance, whose name is still reflected in the cities of London, Leyden, and Lyons; Midir of Bri Leith; and the youthful and handsome Angus, who has been described as "the Adonis of the Irish Pantheon."

Perhaps the best known of the tales connected with the Mythological Cycle are two of the 'Three Sorrows of Story-telling,' the 'Aided Chloinne Tuirenn' [Tragic Death of the Children of Tuirenn] and the 'Aided Chloinne Lir' [Tragic Death of the Children of Lir]. The third story belonging to the 'Three Sorrows of Story-telling' is the 'Tragic Death of the Sons of Usnech' discussed above. Although some version of the 'Tragic Death of the Children of Tuirenn' was evidently extant as early as the ninth century, the tale is preserved only in late manuscripts. The story as we know it relates that the three sons of Tuirenn had slain Cian, the father of Lugh, and that Lugh had laid upon them enormous demands as a fine for the death of his father. Unable to perform Lugh's demands, they return to die. The 'Tragic Death of the Children of Lir,' which is found in no manuscript older than the eighteenth century, tells of the four children of Lir who, transformed into swans by a jealous stepmother, suffered during a period of nine hundred years. Other legends belonging to this cycle are the 'Cath Maige Tured' [Battle of Moytura], which concerns a terrible conflict between the Tuatha de Danann and the Fomorian pirates led by Breas and Balor of the Evil Eye; the 'Tochmarc Etaine' [Wooing of Etain], a tale relating the marriage of a fairy maiden Etain, wife of Midir of Bri Leith, to Eochaid Airemm, King of Ireland, and Midir's winning back his wife from Eochaid by means of a game of chess.

A fourth group of tales, sometimes designated "King Stories," are more or less intimately connected with the legendary history of Ireland. The most important of these, the 'Togail Bruidne Da Dergae' [Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel], which is preserved in the 'Book of the Dun Cow,' tells of the burning of the hostel and the slaying of the High King Conaire Mor by the forces of his foster-brothers, whom he had banished. The 'Orgain Dind Rig' [Destruction of Dind-Rig] concerns the revenge which Labraidh the Wanderer took upon his uncle, who had murdered his brother, Labraidh's father, and had usurped the kingdom. The 'Cath Maige Leana' [Battle of Moylena] deals with a conflict between Conn Cetcathach and Eoghan Mor over the kingship of Ireland, and is, in a measure, connected with the

<sup>3</sup> "Peoples of the goddess Danu," traditionally regarded as the fourth of the five waves of prehistoric invasion of Ireland, who, since their conquest by the Milesians, have dwelt in fairy-mounds and have become the people of the *side* (cf. Anglo-Irish *banshee* from Irish *ban side*, "woman of the side").

Cycle of Finn, since the *fiána* of Leinster and Connaught appear to be arrayed on opposite sides. Other important stories belonging to this cycle are the 'Tochomlod na n-Dessi' [Expulsion of the Desi], the 'Togail Bruidne Maic Dareo' [Destruction of the Hostel of Mac Dareo], the 'Cath Maige Mucrima' [Battle of Mag Mucrima], the 'Boromhean Tribute,' the 'Cath Crinna' [Battle of Crinna], the 'Cath Maige Rath' [Battle of Mag Rath], etc.

A number of legends called *imrama* describe voyages to the Other World. Here belongs the 'Echtra Condla Ruadh' [Adventures of Condla the Red (The Beautiful)], which relates that Condla, son of Conn Cetcathach, was approached one day by a lady whom neither death nor age could touch, and who, invisible to those about the hero, begged him to come with her and become prince of the "Land of the Ever-living." Condla restrained his desire to go, but when, at the end of a month, the lady returned and repeated the request, he leaped into her boat of pearl and sailed away, never to return. The 'Imram Brain maic Febail' [Voyage of Bran, Son of Febal], a legend of very great antiquity, records the adventures of Bran, who, with twenty-seven companions, sailed forth to find the "Land of Maidens"; and the 'Echtra Cormaic i Tir Tairngiri' [Adventures of Cormac in the Land of Promise] tells how Cormac mac Airt, at the instigation of Manannan, visited the Land of Promise and describes his quest of the cup of truth. Certain other *imrama* are religious in tone. An ancient tale, the 'Imram Curaig Maelduin' [Voyage of the Curach of Maelduin], which Tennyson, in a greatly modified version, gave to English readers in his 'Voyage of Maeldune,' recounts Maelduin's voyage in search of his father's murderer; and the 'Imram Curaig hua Corra' [Voyage of the Curach of the O'Corras] and the 'Imram Snedgusa ocus Mac Riagla' [Voyage of Snedgus and Mac Riagla] are legends somewhat similar to that of Maelduin.

Another group of tales, likewise of a religious character, may be termed "vision literature," and of these perhaps the best known is the 'Fis Adamnain' [Vision of Adamnan], in accordance with which the soul of Adamnan is conducted by an angel through the realms of heaven and hell. In this vision, which in all probability may be dated as early as the eleventh century, the joys of the blessed and the tribulations of the wicked are shown with great vividness and in great detail. An interesting study of the 'Fis Adamnain' and the 'Divine Comedy' has been made by C. S. Boswell in his volume, 'An Irish Precursor of Dante.' Later tales of this character are the 'Vision of Fursae,' the 'Vision of Merlino,' and the 'Vision of Tundale,' the latter of which, particularly, closely approaches buffoonery.

As has been indicated above, the Irish poet was a personage of great power, part of which, no doubt, came from the fear of his satire. If one may judge from the evidence of ancient documents, many were the satirical poems and quatrains used by the *fili* and bard to attain either good or selfish ends. Certain prose compositions are likewise satirical in nature. The 'Imthecht na

Tromdaime' [Proceedings of the Great Bardic Institution] tells of the imposition practised on King Guaire of Connaught by Senchan, the chief bard, and a great company of his followers, and it seems to be a satire on the bards themselves, although it contains a fanciful explanation of the recovery of the 'Tain bo Cualnge.' The 'Aislinge Meic Conglinne' [Vision of Mac Conglinne], which may be dated as early as the twelfth century, concerns a poor scholar's rescue of the King of Munster from the "demon of gluttony"; and this extravagant composition, consisting of prose and verse, is said to be a satire on the excesses of the monks and clergy.

Although sometimes classified among historical documents, certain stories and poems may yet be noted. One of these, the 'Imacallam Colum Cille agus ind Oclaig' [Colloquy of Colum Cille and the Youth], a tale which may be as old as the eighth century, concerns a meeting between the famous cleric and the youth Mongan, who tells of various forms in which he has existed, such as a wolf, a stag, etc. A very ancient poem, ascribed to Amairgen, contains a similar theme; and a prose composition, the 'Scel Tuain maic Cairill' [Story of Tuan mac Cairill] is devoted to the various invasions of Ireland which Tuan in successive shapes — a stag, a boar, a hawk, and a salmon — was privileged to witness. In addition to the foregoing legends, classical romance plays its part in medieval Irish literature; and we find versions of the 'Fall of Troy,' the 'Alexander Saga,' portions of the *Æneid*, and other classical and medieval texts preserved in ancient manuscripts. Indeed, there is reason to believe that tales of Troy and of Alexander were not unknown in Ireland as early as the tenth century.

In conclusion, a word regarding ancient Irish poetry should be added. As Miss Hull has pointed out, there is reason to believe that the whole system of ancient Irish poetry "was formed and in vogue before the introduction of the Latin language into Ireland, and that it is a native product which outside influences did not largely modify." In any event, it is safe to say that an elaborate system of poetry was developed in Ireland at a very early date and that Irish poems on secular subjects were being composed at least as early as the Old Irish period. One need only remember Saint Patrick's hymn of the *faeth fiada* [the deer's cry], which may be as old as the fifth century, to gain some idea of the antiquity of Irish rhythmic composition. As has been indicated above, the great vellum books contain many individual poems of various kinds; and the long prose compositions, for the most part, are interlarded here and there with metrical passages. Some of these ancient poems are of great beauty, among which may be cited the verse passages describing Magh Mell in the 'Imram Brain'; the laments of Deirdre; the lament of Cuchulinn for Ferdiad; the love-song of Liadain and Curithir; the poem on summer ascribed to Finn mac Cumall; 'Crede's Lament,' included in the 'Acallam na Senorach'; and many others.

As indicated heretofore, the chief vehicle of expression of the ancient Celts was prose — in fact, with the exception of the Icelanders (who incidentally

borrowed this form from the Irish), they stand almost alone in that they did not employ poetry, to quote the words of Kuno Meyer, "for epical narrative." In fact, there are no ancient Irish epic poems or ballads. Even in later centuries when the Arthurian epics were transferred into Irish, they were all turned from poetry into prose. Consequently, modern readers find in this ancient literature a greater naturalness of expression, in which the simple vigor of the prose-form more than compensates for the somewhat artificial, or sophisticated, poetry of other nations. None of the primitive characteristics of oral expression — so important in the epic — is thereby lost in its transference to the written page.

As in the American Indian languages, the verb is the keystone of the short, crisp Irish sentence, to which it contributes the impressionistic quality of presenting a complete picture in broad and vigorous strokes. It is, therefore, usually placed at the beginning of the sentence, where the accent would naturally fall. Strong stress accent being characteristic of the ancient Irish language, unaccented terminations and even words (pronouns, adverbs, etc.) fade into the sentence group.

Like the literatures of all cold and misty northern countries, Celtic literature is tinged with imaginative qualities of the highest order. Peoples of such nations are obliged, by the rigor of their climates, to seek solace within themselves, to build a world of imagination of their own. Their one great mysterious enemy was the sea, so often lashed into fury by the wintry winds. Also the hardships of life were forever predominant. In the long winter periods food — the great life-giving element — was most difficult to procure. One can thereby readily understand why, in the face of an unfriendly nature, food (cattle, swine, fish, etc.) plays such an important rôle in ancient Irish sagas — in some, as the 'Vision of Mac Conglinne,' for example, the one central theme of the story. And scattered through these noble prose sagas are masterpieces of personal description and color effects. Modern critics are wont to maintain that these elements form the principal contributions of nineteenth-century authors to literature, but where, one may ask, can be found a more beautiful picture than, for example, that of Cuchulinn, as recounted by one of the maidens of Emer in the well-known 'Wooing of Emer'?

"Within the chariot a dark sad man, comeliest of the men of Erin.

"Around him a beautiful crimson five-folded tunic, fastened at its opening on his white breast with a brooch of inlaid gold, against which it heaves beating in full strokes. A shirt with a white hood, interwoven red with flaming gold. Seven red dragon gems on the ground of either of his eyes. Two blue-white, blood-red cheeks, that breathe forth sparks and flashes of fire. A ray of love burns in his look. Methinks a shower of pearls has fallen into his mouth. As black as the side of a black ruin each of his eyebrows. On his two thighs rests a golden-hilted sword, and fastened to the copper frame of the chariot is a blood-red spear with a sharp mettlesome blade, on a

shaft of wood well-fitted to the hand. Over his shoulders a crimson shield with a rim of silver, ornamented with figures of golden animals. He leaps the hero's salmon-leap into the air and does many like swift feats."

But if prose was emphasized, poetry was also much cultivated, for the Celts, unusually gifted throughout their entire history in the use of the spoken word, frequently felt the necessity of expressing their feelings, whether gay or sad, in the more intricate form of verse. As the above-quoted authority notes, most Irish tales and stories, even those we now believe to be most primitive, are interspersed with lyrics put into the mouth of the principal heroes, after the manner of the *cante fable*, most familiar to modern readers from the French story of 'Aucassin et Nicolette.'

There are two chief classes of the ancient poetry of Ireland — that of the professional bard usually attached to the person of a kinglet or chief, and that of the itinerant bard or monk. The former — of whose work, it may be said, little has as yet been published or translated — composed verse-accounts or chronicles of the important events in the lives of their protectors. The latter produced a great variety of verse of which the principal themes are Nature and Religion. In nature poetry the Irish are almost without rivals even among less primitive nations. Meyer has well said that "indeed, these poems occupy a unique position in the literature of the world. To seek out and watch and love Nature, in its tiniest phenomena as in its grandest, was given to no people so early and so fully as to the Celt." As in Irish prose, so also the essential beauty of Irish nature poetry lies in its color and impressionism — the poet makes no attempt to give "an elaborate or sustained description of any scene or scenery, but rather a succession of pictures or images" which are presented with light and skilful touches.

Irish religious poetry is also characteristic in that it offers strikingly accurate pictures of religious life — "the hermit in his lonely cell, the monk at his devotions or at his work of copying in the scriptorium or under the open sky," etc. In addition, we have the more lengthy — and, at the same time, standardized — compositions common to other nations.

The most usual verse-form is the *rann* (of 28 syllables), subdivided into two *leth-ranns* (14 syllables each), which in turn may be subdivided into two *ceth-ranns* (7 syllables each). Vowel assonance and alliteration of consonants are chief characteristics of this verse-form which has its source in the catalectic trochaic tetrameter common to Latin poetry, as found in the popular song of Cæsar's soldiers: —

*Cæsar Gallias subegit                  Nicomedes Cæsarem*  
*Ecce Cæsar nunc triumphat qui          subegit Gallias.*

ROBERT D. SCOTT  
with additions by JOHN L. GERIG

## THE COMBAT OF FERDIAD AND CUCHULINN

From the 'Tain Bo Cualnge' [Cattle-Raid of Cooley]

[Medb, Queen of Connaught, desiring possession of the great bull of Cualnge, assembled an army drawn from four of the five provinces of Ireland, and marched against Ulster, the leaders of her army being herself, her husband Ailill, and Fergus mac Roich, an exile from Ulster, and, according to one account, a former king of that province. Not only had Medb a great superiority in force, but she had arranged her attack to fall at a time when the warriors of Ulster were on their sick-bed, a condition resulting from a curse which had fallen upon them. One hero, however, Cuchulinn, the greatest of the Ulster heroes, was unaffected by the curse; and he, with only a few followers, but with supernatural aid from demigods of whose race he came, had caused great havoc in Medb's army. Medb finally made this compact: she was each day to provide a champion to oppose Cuchulinn, and her army was to be permitted to advance while the combat lasted. If her champion were slain she was either to provide a new champion or halt her army till the next morning. Many of Medb's warriors had fallen in duel with the youthful Ultonian, and the men of Ireland debated as to who should be the man to oppose him on the following morning. All agreed that Ferdiad, a comrade and fellow-pupil of Cuchulinn, was the man who should go. Both Cuchulinn and Ferdiad had received their training in arms from Scathach, Uathach, and Aife, and neither overmatched the other, save in the "feat of the Gae Bulga" [the Barbed Spear] which Cuchulinn possessed. Yet, as against this, Ferdiad was provided with a horn-skin which weapons could not pierce.

Medb thereupon sent for Ferdiad, but he refused to come to her, since he knew that she wanted him to engage in combat with his friend and foster-brother. She then sent druids and poets to satirize and revile him, and to save his honor he came to Medb's camp, where he was feasted and honored. Finnabair, Medb's beautiful daughter, sat beside him, and with every cup of liquor that he took gave him three kisses. Finally, when drunken and merry, Medb told Ferdiad that Cuchulinn had boasted of his ability to overthrow him, and Ferdiad promised Medb that he would meet Cuchulinn on the morrow. Fergus mac Roich, who, albeit one of the leaders of Medb's army, was an exile from Ulster and the foster-father of Cuchulinn, rushed to Cuchulinn to tell him Ferdiad's decision and to warn him against Ferdiad's terrible prowess.

Upon Ferdiad's return to his tent that night, he told them of his promise and they became sad and downcast, for they knew that one or both of the great heroes would fall. Ferdiad himself was troubled, saying that he would "almost liefer fall" by Cuchulinn's hand than that Cuchulinn should fall by his. At break of dawn Ferdiad ordered his charioteer to harness the horses

and they drove directly to the ford, the place of combat. Cuchulinn, who had gone home during the night to bathe and dress himself for the conflict, had not yet returned, so Ferdiad bade the charioteer unharness the horses and spread the cushions and skins of the chariot on the ground. Ferdiad, thereupon, lying down upon the cushions, went to sleep. Soon, however, a rush and a hurtling sound, the trampling of steeds, a whirl of wheels, the clanging of arms and the deep voice of the warrior talking to his charioteer, announced Cuchulinn's approach. Ferdiad arose, girt himself in his battle-dress, and went to the south side of the ford. Cuchulinn approached and took his place on the north side, whereupon they bade each other welcome, Cuchulinn questioning why his friend should come to Ulster to do battle with him, Ferdiad asking why the boy who did service for him while they were being taught skill in arms by Scathach should thus oppose him.]

**G**OOD, O Ferdiad! "cried Cuchulinn. "A pity it is for thee to abandon my alliance and my friendship for the sake of a woman that has been trafficked to fifty other warriors before thee, and it would be long before I would forsake thee for that woman. Therefore, it is not right for thee to come to fight and combat with me; for when we were with Scathach and with Uathach and with Aife, we were together in practice of valor and arms of the world, and it was together we were used to seek out every battle and every battle-field, every combat and every contest, every wood and every desert, every covert and every recess." And thus he spake and he uttered these words: —

*Cuchulinn.* We were heart-companions once;  
We were comrades in the woods;  
We were men that shared a bed,  
When we slept the heavy sleep,  
After hard and weary fights.  
Into many lands, so strange,  
Side by side we sallied forth,  
And we ranged the woodlands through,  
When with Scathach we learned arms!

*Ferdiad.* O Cuchulinn, rich in feats,  
Hard the trade we both have learned;  
Treason hath o'ergone our love;  
Thy first wounding hath been bought;  
Think not of our friendship more,  
Cua, it avails thee not!

"Too long are we now in this way," quoth Ferdiad; "and what arms shall we resort to today, O Cuchulinn?" "With thee is thy choice of weapons this

day till night-time," answered Cuchulinn, "for thou art he that first didst reach the ford." "Rememberest thou at all," asked Ferdiad, "the choice deeds of arms we were wont to practise with Scathach and with Uathach and with Aife?" "Indeed, and I do remember," answered Cuchulinn. "If thou rememberest, let us begin with them."

They betook them to their choicest deeds of arms. They took upon them two equally matched shields for feats, and their eight-edged targes for feats, and their eight small darts, and their eight straight swords with ornaments of walrus-tooth and their eight lesser, ivoryed spears which flew from them and to them like bees on a day of fine weather.

They cast no weapon that struck not. Each of them was busy casting at the other with those missiles from morning's early twilight till noon at midday, the while they overcame their various feats with the bosses and hollows of their feat-shields. However great the excellence of the throwing on either side, equally great was the excellence of the defense, so that during all that time neither of them bled or reddened the other. "Let us cease now from this bout of arms, O Cuchulinn," said Ferdiad; "for it is not by such our decision will come." "Yea, surely, let us cease, if the time hath come," answered Cuchulinn. Then they ceased. They threw their feat-tackle from them into the hands of their charioteers.

"To what weapons shall we resort next, O Cuchulinn?" asked Ferdiad. "Thine is the choice of weapons till nightfall," replied Cuchulinn; "for thou art he that didst first reach the ford." "Let us begin, then," said Ferdiad, "with our straight-cut, smooth-hardened throwing-spears, with cords of full-hard flax on them." "Ay, let us begin then," assented Cuchulinn. Then they took on them two hard shields, equally strong. They fell to their straight-cut, smooth-hardened spears with cords of full-hard flax on them. Each of them was engaged in casting at the other with the spears from the middle of noon till yellowness came over the sun at the hour of evening's sundown. However great the excellence of the defense, equally great was the excellence of the throwing on either side, so that each of them bled and reddened and wounded the other during that time. "Wouldst thou fain make a truce, O Cuchulinn?" asked Ferdiad. "It would please me," replied Cuchulinn; "for whoso begins with arms has the right to desist." "Let us leave off from this now, O Cuchulinn," said Ferdiad. "Ay, let us leave off, an the time hath come," answered Cuchulinn. So they ceased. They threw their arms from them into the hands of their charioteers.

Thereupon each of them went toward the other in the middle of the ford, and each of them put his hand on the other's neck and gave him three kisses in remembrance of his fellowship and friendship. Their horses were in one and the same paddock that night, and their charioteers at one and the same fire; and their charioteers made ready a litter-bed of fresh rushes for them with pillows for wounded men on them. Then came healing and curing folk

to heal and to cure them, and they laid healing herbs and grasses and a curing charm on their cuts and stabs, their gashes and many wounds. Of every healing herb and grass and curing charm that was brought from the fairy dwellings of Erin to Cuchulinn and was applied to the cuts and stabs, to the gashes and many wounds of Cuchulinn, a like portion thereof he sent across the ford westward to Ferdiad, to put to his wounds and his pools of gore, so that the men of Erin should not have it to say, should Ferdiad fall at his hands, it was more than his share of care had been given to him.

Of every food and of savory, soothing, and strong drink that was brought by the men of Erin to Ferdiad, a like portion thereof he sent over the ford northwards to Cuchulinn; for the purveyors of Ferdiad were more numerous than the purveyors of Cuchulinn. All the men of Erin were purveyors to Ferdiad, to the end that he might keep Cuchulinn off from them. But only the inhabitants of Mag Breg [The Plain of Breg] were purveyors to Cuchulinn. They were wont to come daily, that is, every night, to converse with him.

[They remained there that night. Early in the morning they went their ways to the "ford of combat." That day they fought from their chariots with heavy lances and both were sorely wounded. When night came they threw their weapons to their charioteers, each laid his hand on the other's neck and gave him three kisses. Their horses were in one pen that night and their charioteers at one fire. Of every magic potion which was applied to the wounds of Cuchulinn their like share he sent over the ford to Ferdiad; and of every food that was brought to Ferdiad, an equal portion he sent across the ford to Cuchulinn.

Early on the morrow they repaired to the ford for combat. Cuchulinn noted that Ferdiad seemed dark in mood and mentioned it. Both Ferdiad and Cuchulinn, thereupon, lamented the fact that they, foster-brothers, comrades, and friends, should be engaged in such a struggle. That day they chose heavy swords for their combat, and when night came each combatant was a mass of wounds. They parted without a kiss or blessing that night. No healing herbs were sent from Cuchulinn to Ferdiad, and no food was sent from Ferdiad to Cuchulinn; nor were their horses in the same paddock, or their charioteers at the same fire.]

They passed there that night. It was then that Ferdiad arose early on the morrow and went alone to the ford of combat, and dauntless, vengeful, and mighty was the man that went thither that day, even Ferdiad son of Daman. For he knew that that would be the decisive day of the battle and combat; and he knew that one or other of them would fall there that day, or that they both would fall. It was then he donned his battle-weed of battle and fight and combat, or ever Cuchulinn came to meet him. And thus was the manner of this harness of battle and fight and combat: He put his silken, glossy trews

with its border of speckled gold, next to his white skin. Over this, outside, he put his brown-leathern, well-sewed kilt. Outside of this he put a huge, goodly flag, the size of a millstone, the shallow [?] stone of adamant which he had brought from Africa and which neither points nor edges could pierce. He put his solid, very deep, iron kilt of twice molten iron over the huge, goodly flag as large as a millstone, through fear and dread of the Gaë Bulga on that day. About his head he put his crested war-cap of battle and fight and combat, whereon were forty carbuncle-gems beautifully adorning it and studded with red-enamel and crystal and rubies and with shining stones of the Eastern world. His angry, fierce-striking spear he seized in his right hand. On his left side he hung his curved battle-falchion, which would cut a hair against the stream with its keenness and sharpness, with its golden pommel and its rounded hilt of red gold. On the arch-slope of his back he slung his massive, fine-buffalo shield of a warrior, whereon were fifty bosses, wherein a boar could be shown in each of its bosses, apart from the great central boss of red gold. Ferdiad performed divers brilliant, manifold, marvelous feats on high that day, unlearned from anyone before, neither from foster-mother nor from foster-father, neither from Scathach nor from Uathach nor from Aife, but he found them of himself that day in the face of Cuchulinn.

Cuchulinn likewise came to the ford, and he beheld the various brilliant, manifold, wonderful feats that Ferdiad performed on high. "Thou seest yonder, O Laeg my master, the divers, bright, numerous, marvelous feats that Ferdiad performs on high, and I shall receive yon feats one after the other, and, therefore, O Laeg," cried Cuchulinn, "if defeat be my lot this day, do thou prick me on and taunt me and speak evil to me, so that the more my spirit and anger shall rise in me. If, however, before me his defeat takes place, say thou so to me and praise me and speak me fair, to the end that the greater may be my courage!" "It shall surely be done so, if need be, O Cucuc," Laeg answered.

Then Cuchulinn, too, girded his war-harness of battle and fight and combat about him, and performed all kinds of splendid, manifold, marvelous feats on high that day which he had not learned from anyone before, neither with Scathach nor with Uathach nor with Aife.

Ferdiad observed those feats, and he knew they would be plied against him in turn. "To what weapons shall we resort today, O Ferdiad?" asked Cuchulinn. "With thee is thy choice of weapons till night-time," Ferdiad responded. "Let us go to the 'Feat of the Ford,' then," said Cuchulinn. "Ay, let us do so," answered Ferdiad. Albeit Ferdiad spoke that, he deemed it the most grievous thing whereto he could go, for he knew that in that sort Cuchulinn used to destroy every hero and every battle-soldier who fought with him in the "Feat of the Ford."

[Great indeed was the deed that was done on the ford that day.]

Each of them was busy hurling at the other in those deeds of arms from early morning's gloaming till the middle of noon. When midday came, the rage of the men became wild, and each drew nearer to the other.

Thereupon Cuchulinn gave one spring once from the bank of the ford till he stood upon the boss of Ferdiad mac Daman's shield, seeking to reach his head and to strike it from above over the rim of the shield. Straightway Ferdiad gave the shield a blow with his left elbow, so that Cuchulinn went from him like a bird onto the brink of the ford. Again Cuchulinn sprang from the brink of the ford, so that he alighted upon the boss of Ferdiad mac Daman's shield, that he might reach his head and strike it over the rim of the shield from above. Ferdiad gave the shield a thrust with his left knee, so that Cuchulinn went from him like an infant onto the bank of the ford.

Laeg espied that. "Woe then, O Cuchulinn!" cried Laeg; "Meseems the battle-warrior that is against thee hath shaken thee as a fond woman shakes her child. He hath washed thee as a cup is washed in a tub. He hath ground thee as a mill grinds soft malt. He hath pierced thee as a tool bores through an oak. He hath bound thee as the bindweed binds the trees. He hath pounced on thee as a hawk pounces on little birds, so that no more hast thou right or title or claim to valor or skill in arms till the very day of doom and of life, thou little imp of an elf-man!" cried Laeg.

Thereat for the third time, Cuchulinn arose with the speed of the wind, and the swiftness of a swallow, and the dash of a dragon, and the strength [of a lion] into the clouds of the air, till he alighted on the boss of the shield of Ferdiad son of Daman, so as to reach his head that he might strike it from above over the rim of his shield. Then it was that the battle-warrior gave the shield a violent and powerful shake, so that Cuchulinn flew from it into the middle of the ford, the same as if he had not sprung at all.

It was then the first twisting-fit of Cuchulinn took place, so that a swelling and inflation filled him like breath in a bladder, until he made a dreadful, terrible, many-colored, wonderful bow of himself, so that as big as a giant or a man of the sea was the hugely-brave warrior towering directly over Ferdiad.

Such was the closeness of the combat they made, that their heads encountered above and their feet below and their hands in the middle over the rims and bosses of the shields.

[Such was the closeness of the combat they made, that they forced the river out of its bed and out of its course, so that there might have been a reclining place for a king or a queen in the middle of the ford, and not a drop of water was in it but what fell there with the trampling and slipping which the two heroes made in the middle of the ford. At that time they were at the edge-feat of swords. Ferdiad caught his adversary in an unguarded moment and buried his tusk-hilted blade in Cuchulinn's breast, whereupon the ford became crimsoned with the blood which flowed from the wound. As the Ulster

hero weakened under Ferdiad's attack, Dolb and Indolb, Cuchulinn's friends from the fairy-mound, joined in the fray. Whereupon, Ferdiad reproached Cuchulinn for accepting aid from these invisible allies. Cuchulinn retorted by reminding Ferdiad of the advantage which reposed in Ferdiad's horn-skin. Soon, however, Ferdiad killed Dolb and Indolb, and, his courage greatly strengthened by this fact, began again to gain an advantage over his opponent. At this juncture Cuchulinn called for the Gae Bulga. This was its nature: with the stream it was made ready, and from between the fork of the foot it was cast; the wound of a single spear it gave when entering the body, and thirty barbs had it when it opened, and it could not be drawn out of a man's flesh till the flesh had been cut about it. Laeg, Cuchulinn's charioteer, came forward to the brink of the river, made a dam, and set the Gae Bulga in position. Ferdiad's charioteer, Id, who, indeed, was Laeg's brother, and who had been watching Laeg prepare the weapon, came forward, destroyed the dam, and undid his brother's work. Cuchulinn, who had seen Id's activity, called again for the Gae Bulga, and Laeg hastened to prepare it. Id again destroyed the dam, whereupon the brothers fought, and Laeg, victorious, once more prepared the weapon. Id, although vanquished, watched his chance and destroyed the dam yet again. When Cuchulinn saw that the setting of the Gae Bulga had been disturbed he became purple and red all over, and for the third time he sprang from the top of the ground and alighted on the edge of Ferdiad's shield, so as to strike him over the shield from above. Ferdiad gave a blow with his left knee against the leather of the bare shield, so that Cuchulinn was thrown into the waves of the ford.}]

Thereupon Ferdiad gave three severe woundings to Cuchulinn. Cuchulinn cried and shouted loudly to Laeg to make ready the Gae Bulga for him. Laeg attempted to get near it, but Ferdiad's charioteer prevented him. Then Laeg grew very wroth at his brother and he made a spring at him, and he closed his long, full-valiant hands over him, so that he quickly threw him to the ground and straightway bound him. And then he went from him quickly and courageously, so that he filled the pool and stayed the stream and set the Gae Bulga. And he cried out to Cuchulinn that it was served, for it was not to be discharged without a quick word of warning before it. Hence it is that Laeg cried out: —

"Ware! beware the Gae Bulga,  
Battle-winning Culann's hound!" *et reliqua.*

And he sent it to Cuchulinn along the stream.

Then it was that Cuchulinn let fly the white Gae Bulga from the fork of his irresistible right foot. Ferdiad began to defend the ford against Cuchulinn, so that the noble Cu arose with the swiftness of a swallow and the wail of the storm-play in the rafters of the firmament, so that he laid hold of the

breadth of his two feet of the bed of the ford, in spite of the champion. Ferdiad prepared for the feat according to the testimony thereof. He lowered his shield, so the spear went over its edge into the watery, water-cold river. And he looked at Cuchulinn, and he saw all his various, venomous feats made ready, and he knew not to which of them he should first give answer, whether to the "Fist's breast-spear," or to the "Wild shield's broad-spear," or to the "Short spear from the middle of the palm," or to the white Gae Bulga over the fair, watery river.

When Ferdiad saw that his gilla had been thrown and heard the Gae Bulga called for, he thrust his shield down to protect the lower part of his body. Cuchulinn gripped the short spear which was in his hand, cast it off the palm of his hand over the rim of the shield and over the edge of the corselet and horn-skin, so that its farther half was visible after piercing his heart in his bosom. Ferdiad gave a thrust of his shield upwards to protect the upper part of his body, though it was help that came too late. The gilla set the Gae Bulga down the stream, and Cuchulinn caught it in the fork of his foot, and when Ferdiad raised his shield Cuchulinn threw the Gae Bulga as far as he could cast underneath at Ferdiad, so that it passed through the strong, thick, iron apron of wrought iron, and broke in three parts the huge, goodly stone the size of a millstone, so that it cut its way through the body's protection into him, till every joint and every limb was filled with its barbs.

"Ah, that now sufficeth," sighed Ferdiad: "I am fallen of that. But, yet one thing more: mightily didst thou drive with thy right foot. And 'twas not fair of thee for me to fall by thy hand." And he yet spake and uttered these words: —

"O Cu of grand feats,  
Unfairly I'm slain!  
Thy guilt clings to me;  
My blood falls on thee!

"No meed for the wretch  
Who treads treason's gap.  
Now weak is my voice;  
Ah, gone is my bloom!

"My ribs' armor bursts,  
My heart is all gore;  
I battled not well;  
I'm smitten, O Cu!

"Unfair, side by side,  
To come to the ford.  
'Gainst my noble ward  
Hath Medb turned my hand!

"There'll come rooks and crows  
 To gaze on my arms,  
 To eat flesh and blood.  
 A tale, Cu, for thee!"

Thereupon Cuchulinn hastened towards Ferdiad and clasped his two arms about him, and bore him with all his arms and his armor and his dress northwards over the ford, that so it should be with his face to the north of the ford the triumph took place and not to the west of the ford with the men of Erin. Cuchulinn laid Ferdiad there on the ground, and a cloud and a faint and a swoon came over Cuchulinn there by the head of Ferdiad. Laeg espied it, and the men of Erin all arose for the attack upon him. "Come, O Cucuc," cried Laeg; "arise now from thy trance, for the men of Erin will come to attack us, and it is not single combat they will allow us, now that Ferdiad son of Daman son of Dare is fallen by thee." "What availeth it me to arise, O gilla," moaned Cuchulinn, "now that this one is fallen by my hand?"

[Laeg thereupon attempts to comfort Cuchulinn, while Cuchulinn laments and bemoans Ferdiad.]

"Ah, Ferdiad," spake Cuchulinn, "greatly have the men of Erin deceived and abandoned thee, to bring thee to contend and do battle with me. For no easy thing is it to contend and do battle with me on the Raid for the Kine of Cualnge! And yet, never before have I found combat that was so sore or distressed me so as thy combat, save the combat with Oenfer Aife, mine one own son." Thus he spake, and he uttered these words: —

"Ah, Ferdiad, betrayed to death.  
 Our last meeting, oh, how sad!  
 Thou to die, I to remain.  
 Ever sad our long farewell!

"When we over yonder dwelt  
 With our Scathach, steadfast, true,  
 This we thought till end of time,  
 That our friendship ne'er would end!

"Dear to me thy noble blush;  
 Dear thy comely, perfect form;  
 Dear thine eye, blue-gray and clear;  
 Dear thy wisdom and thy speech!

"Never strode to rending fight,  
 Never wrath and manhood held,  
 Nor slung shield across broad back,  
 One like thee, Daman's red son!

"Never have I met till now,  
Since I Oenfer Aife slew,  
One thy peer in deeds of arms,  
Never have I found, Ferdiad!

"Finnabair, Medb's daughter fair,  
Beauteous, lovely though she be,  
As a gad round sand or stones,  
She was shown to thee, Ferdiad! "

Then Cuchulinn turned to gaze on Ferdiad. "Ah, my master Laeg," cried Cuchulinn, "now strip Ferdiad and take his armor and garments off him, that I may see the brooch for the sake of which he entered on the combat and fight with me." Laeg came up and stripped Ferdiad. He took his armor and garments off him and he saw the brooch and he placed the brooch in Cuchulinn's hand, and Cuchulinn began to lament and complain over Ferdiad, and he spake these words: —

"Alas, golden brooch;  
Ferdiad of the hosts,  
O good smiter, strong,  
Victorious thy hand!

"Thy hair blond and curled,  
A wealth fair and grand.  
Thy soft, leaf-shaped belt  
Around thee till death!

"Our comradeship dear;  
Thy noble eye's gleam;  
Thy golden-rimmed shield;  
Thy sword, treasures worth!

"Thy white-silver torque  
Thy noble arm binds.  
Thy chess-board worth wealth;  
Thy fair, ruddy cheek!

"To fall by my hand,  
I own was not just!  
'Twas no noble fight.  
Alas, golden brooch!

"Thy death at Cu's hand  
Was dire, O dear calf!  
Unequal the shield  
Thou hadst for the strife!

“Unfair was our fight,  
 Our woe and defeat!  
 Fair the great chief;  
 Each host overcome  
 And put under foot!  
 Alas, golden brooch!”

“Come, O Laeg my master,” cried Cuchulinn; “now cut open Ferdiad and take the Gae Bulga out, because I may not be without my weapons.” Laeg came and cut open Ferdiad and he took the Gae Bulga out of him. And Cuchulinn saw his weapons bloody and red-stained by the side of Ferdiad, and he uttered these words: —

“O Ferdiad, in gloom we meet.  
 Thee I see both red and pale.  
 I myself with unwashed arms;  
 Thou liest in thy bed of gore!

“Were we yonder in the East,  
 Scathach and our Uathach near,  
 There would not be pallid lips  
 Twixt us two, and arms of strife!”

[In continuation of this poem Cuchulinn spoke a number of strophes describing various conflicts in which he and Ferdiad had taken part as comrades, after which he with his charioteer sadly left the ford.]

From ‘Táin Bó Cúalnge,’ translated by Joseph Dunn. Reprinted by permission of the translator

#### ADVENTURES OF CONDLA THE RED (THE BEAUTIFUL), SON OF COND OF THE HUNDRED BATTLES HERE

WHY is Art called the single man [Oenfer]? The answer is not difficult. One day Condla Ruad, son of Cond of the Hundred Battles, was walking with his father in the heights of Usnech when he saw a woman of strange dress advancing toward him. Says Condla, “Whence comest thou, woman?” says he. “I have come,” said the woman, “from the lands of the living where there is neither death nor sin nor sorrow. We consume everlasting feasts without preparation, beautiful assemblies amongst us without dissension. We are the great Sid, so that for that reason we are called the fairies [race of peace].” “What sayest thou, boy?” says Cond to his son, for no one saw the woman but Condla alone. The woman answered, “He is speaking to a woman young, beautiful, of race eternal. She

does not fear [await] death, nor old age. I love Condla the Red; I invite him to Mag Mell where there is a victorious king, an ever-living king without sorrow nor woe in the land over which he is master.

[Verse]

"Come with me, O Condla the Red, of the speckled neck, flame-red, a yellow crown awaits thee; over thy pretty purple-colored face an eternal dignity if thou acceptest; thy figure shall not wither, nor its youth nor its beauty till the dreadful judgment." Said Cond to the druid, Coran his name, for he heard everything that the woman said without seeing her:

"I beseech you, O Coran of the powerful song, possessing great art, an edict has come to me which is greater than my counsel, which is greater than my power; no combat has come to me since I have assumed power greater than my strength; an unseen form assails me, about my son it sings bewitched through heathen tricks; against my royal power it bears the incantations of women."

Thereupon the druid sang against the voice of the woman so that no one heard the voice of the woman nor did Condla see her from that time on. When the woman left before the singing of the druid she cast an apple to Condla. Condla remained until the end of the month without bread, without drink, without food. No other food was satisfying for him to eat but the apple. There diminished nothing from the apple, no matter how much he ate of it, but it was always whole. Grief seized Condla thereupon about the woman that he might see her. The day that the month was ended, he was with his father in Mag Archommin, when he saw the same woman coming to him, and she said to him, "'Tis no lofty seat on which Condla sits among short-lived mortals awaiting fearful death. The ever-living ones invite thee. Thou art a champion [or favorite] to the men of Tethra, for they see thee every day in the assemblies of thy father's home among thy dear friends."

When Cond heard the voice of the woman he said to his followers: "Call to me the druid; I see that her tongue is loosened today." The woman answered thereupon:

"O Cond of the Hundred Battles, druidism is not loved; little has it progressed to honor on the Great Strand. A just man with a great following and wonderful shall come; his law will scatter the charms of druids from journeying on the lips of the black, lying demons."

It was wondrous to Cond that Condla did not make any other answer but that the woman would come. "Dost thou understand what the woman has said, O Condla?" Condla answers: "It is not clear to me; but I love my people. Grief now seizes me about the woman." The woman answered thereupon so that she spoke thus: [The verses she utters do not belong to the original story and, therefore, have no bearing on it.]

After the woman spoke thus, Condla leapt thereupon so that he was in the

ship of glass. They saw him withdraw little by little from them. They rowed thereupon over the sea away from them, and no one saw them from that day, nor do they know whither they went. When they were counseling in assembly they saw Art coming toward them. "Art is alone today," says Cond, "for he has no brother." "A good word hast thou spoken," says Coran, "this name shall remain with him forever." So that it is thus the name Art Oenfer clung to him thenceforth.

Translated by John L. Gerig

### THE STORY OF MAC DATHO'S PIG

**A** GLORIOUS king once held rule over the men of Leinster; his name was Mesroda Mac Datho. Now Mac Datho had among his possessions a hound which was the guardian of all Leinster; the name of the hound was Ailbe, and all of the land of Leinster was filled with reports of the fame of it, and of that hound hath it been sung:

Mesroda, son of Datho,  
Was he the boar who reared;  
And his the hound called Ailbe;  
No lie the tale appeared!  
The splendid hound of wisdom,  
The hound that far is fame,  
The hound from whom Moynalvy  
For evermore is named.

By King Ailill and Queen Maev were sent folk to the son of Datho to demand that hound, and at that very hour came heralds from Conor the son of Ness to demand him; and to all of these a welcome was bid by the people of Mac Datho, and they were brought to speak with Mac Datho in his palace.

At the time that we speak of, this palace was a hostelry that was the sixth of the hostelries of Ireland; there were beside it the hostelry of Da Derga in the land of Cualan in Leinster; also the hostelry of Forgall the Wily, which is beside Lusk; and the hostelry of Da Reo in Breffny; and the hostelry of Da Choca in the west of Meath; and the hostelry of the landholder Blai in the country of the men of Ulster. There were seven doors to that palace, and seven passages ran through it; also there stood within it seven cauldrons, and in every one of the cauldrons was seething the flesh of oxen and the salted flesh of swine. Every traveler who came into the house after a journey would thrust a fork into a cauldron, and whatsoever he brought out at the first thrust had he to eat: if he got nothing at the first thrust, no second attempt was allowed him.

They brought the heralds before Mac Datho as he sat upon his throne, that he might learn of their requests before they made their meal, and in this manner they made known their message. "We have come," said the men who were sent from Connaught, "that we might ask for thy hound; 'tis by Ailill and Maev we are sent. Thou shalt have in payment for him six thousand milch cows, also a two-horsed chariot with its horses, the best to be had in Connaught, and at the end of a year as much again shall be thine." "We also," said the heralds from Ulster, "have come to ask for thy hound; we have been sent by Conor, and Conor is a friend who is of no less value than these. He also will give to thee treasures and cattle, and the same amount at the end of the year, and he will be a stout friend to thee."

Now after he had received this message Mac Datho sank into a deep silence, he ate nothing, neither did he sleep, but tossed about from one side to another, and then said his wife to him: "For a long time hast thou fasted; food is before thee, yet thou eatest not; what is it that ails thee?" and Mac Datho made her no answer.

[Here follows a dialogue in verse in which Mac Datho's wife remarks upon the grief which he seemed anxious to hide, and Mac Datho explains that the source of his worry is the fact that if he gives the hound to either of these powerful kings, he will incur the wrath of the other. The wife thereupon makes the suggestion that he give the hound to both of them. Such a course would avert trouble for him, and, if the kings cared to fight for its possession, that was no affair of his. Mac Datho was well pleased with this advice and resolved to put the plan into effect. So he told the messengers from Connaught that if Ailill and Maev should come in splendor to a feast at his house on a certain day they should have the hound. To the messengers from Ulster he promised the hound to Conor under the same conditions, for he planned that the two armies should arrive at his palace upon the same day. Upon the appointed day the two armies arrived, and Mac Datho himself went outside to bid them welcome, warning them, however, that they had not prepared for two armies at the same time. At any rate, they went into the palace; one half of the house received the Ulstermen, and the other half the men from Connaught; and it was no meeting of friends that was seen in that house, for the men of Ulster and Connaught had for many years been deadly enemies.]

Then they slaughtered for them Mac Datho's boar; for seven years had that boar been nurtured upon the milk of fifty cows, but surely venom must have entered into its nourishment, so many of the men of Ireland did it cause to die. They brought in the boar, and forty oxen as side-dishes to it, besides other kind of food; the son of Datho himself was steward to their feast. "Be ye welcome!" said he; "this beast before you hath not its match;

and a goodly store of beeves and of swine may be found with the men of Leinster! And, if there be aught lacking to you, more shall be slain for you in the morning."

"It is a mighty boar," said Conor.

"'Tis a mighty one indeed," said Ailill. "How shall it be divided, O Conor?" said he.

"How?" cried down Bricriu, the son of Carbad, from above; "in the place where the warriors of Ireland are gathered together, there can be but one test for the division of it, even the part that each man hath taken in warlike deeds and strife: surely each man of you hath struck the other a buffet on the nose ere now!"

"Thus then shall it be," said Ailill.

"'Tis a fair test," said Conor in assent; "we have here a plenty of lads in this house who have done battle on the borders."

"Thou shalt lose thy lads tonight, Conor," said Senlaech the charioteer, who came from rushy Conalad in the West; "often have they left a fat steer for me to harry, as they sprawled on their backs upon the road that leadeth to the rushes of Dedah."

"Fatter was the steer that thou hadst to leave to us," said Munremur, the son of Gerrcind; "even thine own brother, Cruachniu, son of Ruadlam; and it was from Conalad of Cruachan that he came."

"He was no better," cried Lugaid the son of Curoi of Munster, "than Loth the Great, the son of Fergus Mac Lete; and Echbel the son of Dedad left him lying in Tara Luachra."

"What sort of a man was he whom ye boast of?" cried Celtchar of Ulster. "I myself slew that horny-skinned son of Dedad. I cut the head from his shoulders."

At the last it fell out that one man raised himself above all the men of Ireland; he was Ket, the son of Mata, he came from the land of Connaught. He hung up his weapons at a greater height than the weapons of anyone else who was there, he took a knife in his hand, and he placed himself at the side of the boar.

"Find ye now," said he, "one man among the men of Ireland who can equal my renown, or else leave the division of the boar to me."

All the Ulstermen were thrown into amazement. "Seest thou that, O Laegaire?" said Conor.

"Never shall it be," said Laegaire the Triumphant, "that Ket should have the division of this boar in the face of us all."

"Softly now, O Laegaire!" said Ket; "let me hold speech with thee. With you men of Ulster it hath for long been a custom that each lad among you who takes the arms of a warrior should play first with us the game of war: thou, O Laegaire, like to the others didst come to the border, and we rode against one another. And thou didst leave thy charioteer, and thy chariot and

thy horses behind thee, and thou didst fly pierced through with a spear. Not with such a record as that shalt thou obtain the boar"; and Laegaire sat himself down.

"It shall never come to pass," said a great fair-haired warrior, stepping forward from the bench whereon he had sat, "that the division of the boar shall be left to Ket before our very eyes."

"To whom then appertains it?" asked Ket.

"To one who is a better warrior than thou," he said, "even to Angus, the son of Lama Gabaid [Hand-in-danger] of the men of Ulster."

"Why namest thou thy father 'Hand-in-danger'?" said Ket.

"Why indeed, I know not," he said.

"Ah! but I know it!" said Ket. "Long ago I went upon a journey in the east, a war-cry was raised against me, all men attacked me, and Lama Gabaid was among them. He made a cast of a great spear against me, I hurled the same spear back upon him, and the spear cut his hand from him so that it lay upon the ground. How dares the son of that man to measure his renown with mine?" and Angus went back to his place.

"Come, and claim a renown to match mine," said Ket; "else let me divide this boar."

"It shall never be thy part to be the first to divide it," said a great fair-haired warrior of the men of Ulster.

"Who then is this?" said Ket.

"'Tis Eogan, son of Durthacht," said they all; "Eogan, the lord of Fernmay."

"I have seen him upon an earlier day," said Ket.

"Where hast thou seen me?" said Eogan.

"It was before thine own house," said Ket. "As I was driving away thy cattle, a cry of war was raised in the lands about me; and thou didst come out at that cry. Thou didst hurl thy spear against me, and it was fixed in my shield; but I hurled the same spear back against thee, and it tore out one of thy two eyes. All the men of Ireland can see that thou art one-eyed; here is the man that struck thine other eye out of thy head," and he also sat down.

"Make ye ready again for the strife for renown, O ye men of Ulster!" cried Ket. "Thou hast not yet gained the right to divide the boar," said Munremur, Gerrcind's son.

"Is that Munremur?" cried Ket; "I have but one short word for thee, O Munremur! Not yet hath the third day passed since I smote the heads off three warriors who came from your lands, and the midmost of the three was the head of thy firstborn son!" and Munremur also sat down.

"Come to the strife for renown!" cried Ket.

"That strife will I give to thee," said Mend the son of Salcholcam [the Sword-heeled].

"Who is this?" asked Ket.

"'Tis Mend," said all who were there.

"Hey there!" cried Ket. "The son of the man with the nickname comes to measure his renown with mine! Why, Mend, it was by me that the nickname of thy father came; 'twas I who cut the heel from him with my sword so that he hopped away from me upon one leg! How shall the son of that one-legged man measure his renown with mine?" and he also sat down.

"Come to the strife for renown!" cried Ket.

"That warfare shalt thou have from me!" said an Ulster warrior, tall, gray, and more terrible than the rest.

"Who is this?" asked Ket.

"'Tis Celtchar, the son of Uitechar," cried all.

"Pause thou a little, Celtchar," said Ket, "unless it be in thy mind to crush me in an instant. Once did I come to thy dwelling, O Celtchar, a cry was raised about me, and all men hurried up at that cry, and thou also camest beside them. It was in a ravine that the combat between us was held; thou didst hurl thy spear against me, and against thee I also hurled my spear; and my spear pierced thee through the leg and through the groin, so that from that hour thou hast been diseased, nor hath son or daughter been born to thee. How canst thou strive in renown with me?" and he also sat down.

"Come to the strife for renown!" cried Ket.

"That strife shalt thou have," said Cuscrid the Stammerer, of Macha, King Conor's son.

"Who is this?" said Ket. "'Tis Cuscrid," said all; "he hath a form which is as the form of a king."

"Nor hath he aught to thank thee for," said the youth.

"Good!" said Ket. "It was against me that thou didst come on the day when thou didst make trial of thy weapons, my lad: 'twas in the borderland that we met. And there thou didst leave the third part of thy folk behind thee, and thou didst fly with a spear-thrust through thy throat so that thou canst speak no word plainly, for the spear cut in sunder the sinews of thy neck; and from that hour thou hast been called Cuscrid the Stammerer." And in this fashion did Ket put to shame all the warriors of the province of Ulster.

But as he was exulting near to the boar, with his knife in his hand, all saw Conall the Victorious enter the palace; and Conall sprang into the midst of the house, and the men of Ulster hailed him with a shout; and Conor himself took his helmet from his head, and swung it on high to greet him.

"'Tis well that I wait for the portion that befalls me!" said Conall. "Who is he who is the divider of the boar for ye?"

"That office must be given to the man who stands there," said Conor, "even to Ket, the son of Mata."

"Is this true, O Ket?" said Conall. "Art thou the man to allot this boar?" And then sang Ket:

"Conall, all hail!  
 Hard stony spleen!  
 Wild glowing flame!  
 Ice-glitter keen!  
 Blood in thy breast  
 Rageth and boils;  
 Oft didst thou wrest  
 Victory's spoils:

Thou scarred son of Finnchoem, thou truly canst claim  
 To stand rival to me, and to match me in fame!"

And Conall replied to him:

"Hail to thee, Ket!  
 Well are we met!  
 Heart icy-cold,  
 Home for the bold!  
 Ender of grief!  
 Car-riding chief!  
 Sea's stormy wave!  
 Bull, fair and brave!

Ket! first of the children of Matach!

The proof shall be found when to combat we dart,  
 The proof shall be found when from combat we part;  
 He shall tell of that battle who guardeth the stirks,  
 He shall tell of that battle at handcraft who works;  
 And the heroes shall stride to the wild lion-fight,  
 For by men shall fall men in this palace tonight:

Welcome, Ket!"

"Rise thou, and depart from this boar," said Conall.

"What claim wilt thou bring why I should do this?" said Ket.

"'Tis true indeed," said Conall, "thou art contending in renown with me. I will give thee one claim only, O Ket! I swear by the oath of my tribe that since the day that I first received a spear into my hand I have seldom slept without the head of a slain man of Connaught as my pillow; and I have not let pass a day or a night in which a man of Connaught hath not fallen by my hand."

"'Tis true indeed," said Ket, "thou art a better warrior than I. Were but Anluan here, he could battle with thee in another fashion; shame upon us that he is not in this house!"

"Ay, but Anluan is here!" cried Conall, and therewith he plucked Anluan's head from his belt: And he threw the head towards Ket, so that it smote him upon the chest, and a gulp of blood was dashed over his lips. And Ket came away from the boar, and Conall placed himself beside it.

"Now let men come to contend for renown with me!" cried Conall. But among the men of Connaught there was none who would challenge him, and they raised a wall of shields, like a great vat around him, for in that house was evil wrangling, and men in their malice would make cowardly casts at him. And Conall turned to divide the boar, and he took the end of the tail in his mouth. And although the tail was so great that it was a full load for nine men, yet he sucked it all into his mouth so that nothing of it was left.

[In his division of the boar Conall gave only the two fore-legs to the men of Connaught, and they immediately sprang to their feet. The men of Ulster sprang up likewise, and the two parties rushed at each other. Very soon the floor was piled high with the slain and streams of blood flowed under the doors. The hosts broke through the doors and continued the struggle outside. At this moment Mac Datho released the hound between the two armies, allowing it to go to which army it chose. The hound went to the side of the Ulstermen and joined in the attack on the men of Connaught, who were in flight. It is also told that in the plain of Ailbe the hound seized hold of the poles of the chariot in which Ailill and Maev rode, and there Ferloga, charioteer of Ailill and Maev, fell upon him, so that he cast his body to one side, and his head was left upon the poles of the chariot. And they say that it is for that reason the plain of Ailbe is so named.]

Translated by A. N. Leahy

## THE WOOING OF ETAIN

[From the 'Book of the Dun (Cow)']

### I

[Etain of the Horses, daughter of Ailill, was the wife of Midir, who dwelt in the fairy-knoll of Bri Leith. But Midir had another wife, Fuamnach, who was filled with jealousy toward Etain. Using her own powers of sorcery and assisted by a druid, Fuamnach caused Etain to be transferred into the shape of a butterfly and to be borne about on a great wind for a period of seven years. Finally she was borne to the palace of Angus, son of the great god, the Dagda, and Angus recognized her, although in her transformed shape.]

AND he made a bower for Etain with clear windows for it through which she might pass, and a veil of purple was laid upon her; and that bower was carried about by Mac O'c wherever he went. And there each night she slept beside him by a means that he devised, so that she became well-nourished and fair of form; for that bower was filled with

marvelously sweet-scented shrubs, and it was upon these that she thrived, upon the odor and blossom of the best of precious herbs.

Now to Fuamnach came tidings of the love and the worship that Etain had from Mac O'c, and she came to Mider, and "Let thy foster-son," said she, "be summoned to visit thee, that I may make peace between you two, and may then go to seek for news of Etain." And the messenger from Mider went to Mac O'c, and Mac O'c went to Mider to greet him; but Fuamnach for a long time wandered from land to land till she was in that very mansion where Etain was; and then she blew beneath her with the same blast as aforetime, so that the blast carried her out of her bower, and she was blown before it, as she had been before for seven years through all the land of Erin, and she was driven by the wind of that blast to weakness and woe. And the wind carried her over the roof of a house where the men of Ulster sat at their ale, so that she fell through the roof into a cup of gold that stood near the wife of Etar the Warrior, whose dwelling-place was near to the Bay of Cichmany in the province that was ruled over by Conor. And the woman swallowed Etain together with the milk that was in the cup, and she bare her in her womb, till the time came that she was born thereafter as an earthly maid, and the name of Etain, the daughter of Etar, was given to her. And it was one thousand and twelve years since the time of the first begetting of Etain by Ailill to the time when she was born the second time as the daughter of Etar.

Now Etain was nurtured at Inver Cichmany in the house of Etar, with fifty maidens about her of the daughters of the chiefs of the land; and it was Etar himself who still nurtured and clothed them, that they might be companions to his daughter Etain. And upon a certain day, when those maidens were all at the river-mouth to bathe there, they saw a horseman on the plain who came to the water toward them. A horse he rode that was brown, curvetting, and prancing, with a broad forehead and a curly mane and tail. Green, long, and flowing was the cloak that was about him, his shirt was embroidered with embroidery of red gold, and a great brooch of gold in his cloak reached to his shoulder on either side. Upon the back of that man was a silver shield with a golden rim; the handle for the shield was silver, and a golden boss was in the midst of the shield: he held in his hand a five-pointed spear with rings of gold about it from the haft to the head. The hair that was above his forehead was yellow and fair; and upon his brow was a circlet of gold, which confined the hair so that it fell not about his face. He stood for a while upon the shore of the bay; and he gazed upon the maidens, who were all filled with love for him, and then he sang this song: [Here follow several quatrains based on the events related above.]

And after that he had spoken thus, the young warrior went away from the place where the maidens were; and they knew not whence it was that he had come, nor whither he departed afterwards.

Moreover it is told of Mac O'c, that after the disappearance of Etain he came to the meeting appointed between him and Mider; and when he found that Fuamnach was away: "'Tis deceit," said Mider, "that this woman hath practised upon us; and if Etain shall be seen by her to be in Ireland, she will work evil upon Etain." "And indeed," said Mac O'c, "it seemeth to me that thy guess may be true. For Etain hath long since been in my own house, even in the palace where I dwell; moreover she is now in that shape into which that woman transformed her; and 'tis most likely that it is upon her that Fuamnach hath rushed." Then Mac O'c went back to his palace, and he found his bower of glass empty, for Etain was not there. And Mac O'c turned him, and he went upon the track of Fuamnach, and he overtook her at Oenach Bodbgnai, in the house of Bressal Etarlam the Druid. And Mac O'c attacked her, and he struck off her head, and he carried the head with him till he came to within his own borders.

Yet a different tale hath been told of the end of Fuamnach, for it hath been said that by the aid of Manannan both Fuamnach and Mider were slain in Bri Leith. . . .

## II

[From the Egerton version]

[A year after Eochaid Airemm had taken the sovereignty of Erin he sent out commands that the men of Ireland should assemble at Tara to hold festival and to adjust the taxes and imposts which should be set upon them. And the men of Ireland answered that they would not assemble in the Festival of Tara until he had found himself a queen, for Eochaid was not married. So Eochaid sent out messengers to search for a girl who was the fairest in Ireland and who had not been married. And at the bay of Cichmany a wife was found for him and her name was Etain, the daughter of Etar.]

And Eochaid came to that place to take the maiden thence, and this was the way that he took; for as he crossed over the ground where men hold the assembly of Bri Leith, he saw the maiden at the brink of the spring. A clear comb of silver was held in her hand, the comb was adorned with gold; and near her, as for washing, was a basin of silver whereon four birds had been chased, and there were little bright gems of carbuncle on the rims of the basin. A bright purple mantle waved round her; and beneath it was another mantle, ornamented with silver fringes: the outer mantle was clasped over her bosom with a golden brooch. A tunic she wore, with a long hood that might cover her head attached to it; it was stiff and glossy with green silk beneath red embroidery of gold, and was clasped over her breasts with marvelously wrought clasps of silver and gold; so that men saw the bright gold and the green silk flashing against the sun. On her head were two tresses of

golden hair, and each tress had been plaited into four strands; at the end of each strand was a little ball of gold. And there was that maiden, undoing her hair that she might wash it, her two arms out through the armholes of her smock. Each of her two arms was as white as the snow of a single night, and each of her cheeks was as rosy as the foxglove. Even and small were the teeth in her head, and they shone like pearls. Her eyes were as blue as a hyacinth, her lips delicate and crimson; very high, soft, and white were her shoulders. Tender, polished, and white were her wrists; her fingers long, and of great whiteness; her nails were beautiful and pink. White as the snow, or as the foam of the wave, was her side; long was it, slender, and as soft as silk. Smooth and white were her thighs; her knees were round and firm and white; her ankles were straight as the rule of a carpenter. Her feet were slim, and as white as the ocean's foam; evenly set were her eyes; her eyebrows were of a bluish black, such as ye see upon the shell of a beetle. Never a maid fairer than she, or more worthy of love, was till then seen by the eyes of men; and it seemed to them that she must be one of those who have come from the fairy mounds: it is of this maiden that men have spoken when it hath been said: "All that's graceful must be tested by Etain; all that's lovely by the standard of Etain."

And desire of her seized upon the king; and he sent a man of his people in front of him to go to her kindred, in order that she might abide to await his coming. And afterwards the king came to the maiden, and he sought speech from her: "Whence art thou sprung, O maiden?" says Eochaid, "and whence is it that thou hast come?" "It is easy to answer thee," said the maiden: "Etain is my name, the daughter of the king of Echrad; 'out of the fairy mound' am I." "Shall an hour of dalliance with thee be granted to me?" said Eochaid. "'Tis for that I have come hither under thy safeguard," said she. "And indeed twenty years have I lived in this place, ever since I was born in the mound where the fairies dwell; and the men who dwell in the elf-mounds, their kings and their nobles, have been a-wooing me: yet to never a one of them was granted sleep with me, for I have loved thee, and have set my love and affection upon thee; and that ever since I was a little child, and had first the gift of speech. It was for the high tales of thee, and of thy splendor, that I have loved thee thus; and though I have never seen thee before, I knew thee at once by reason of the report of thee that I had heard; it is thou, I know, to whom we have attained." "It is no evil-minded lover who now inviteth thee," says Eochaid. "Thou shalt be welcomed by me, and I will leave all women for thy sake, and thine alone will I be so long as it is pleasing to thee." "Let the bride-price that befits me be paid," said the maiden, "and after that let my desire be fulfilled." "It shall be as thou hast said," the king answered her; and he gave the value of seven cumals to be her bride-price; and after that he brought her to Tara, whereon a fair and hearty welcome was made to her.

Now there were three brothers of the one blood, all sons of Finn, namely, Eochaid Airemm, and Eochaid, and Ailill Anglonnach, or Ailill of the Single Stain, because the only stain that was upon him was the love that he had for his brother's wife. And at that time came all the men of Ireland to hold the festival of Tara; they were there for fourteen days before Samhain, the day when the summer endeth, and for fourteen days after that day. It was at the feast of Tara that love for Etain in the daughter of Etar came upon Ailill Anglonnach; and ever so long as they were at the Tara Feast, so long he gazed upon the maid. And it was there that the wife of Ailill spoke to him; she who was the daughter of Luchta of the Red Hand, who came from the province of Leinster: "Ailill," said she, "why dost thou gaze at her from afar? for long gazing is a token of love." And Ailill gave blame to himself for this thing, and after that he looked not upon the maid.

Now it followed that after that the Feast of Tara had been consumed, the men of Ireland parted from one another, and then it was that Ailill became filled with the pangs of envy and desire; and he brought upon himself the choking misery of a sore sickness, and was borne to the stronghold of Frémain in Tethba after that he had fallen into that woe. There also, until a whole year had ended, sickness long brooded over Ailill, and for long was he in distress, yet he allowed none to know of his sickness. And there Eochaid came to learn of his brother's state, and he came near to his brother, and laid his hand upon his chest; and Ailill heaved a sigh. "Why," said Eochaid, "surely this sickness of thine is not such as to cause thee to lament; how fares it with thee?" "By my word," said Ailill, "'tis no easier that I grow; but it is worse each day, and each night." "Why, what ails thee?" said Eochaid. "By my word of truth," said Ailill, "I know not." "Bring one of my folk hither," said Eochaid, "one who can find out the cause of this illness."

Then Fachtna, the chief physician of Eochaid, was summoned to give aid to Ailill, and he laid his hand upon his chest, and Ailill heaved a sigh. "Ah," said Fachtna, "there is no need for lament in this matter, for I know the cause of thy sickness; one or other of these two evils oppresses thee, the pangs of envy, or the pangs of love: nor hast thou been aided to escape from them until now." And Ailill was full of shame, and he refused to confess to Fachtna the cause of his illness, and the physician left him.

Now, after all this, King Eochaid went in person to make a royal progress throughout the realm of Ireland, and he left Etain behind him in his fortress; and "Lady," said he, "deal thou gently with Ailill so long as he is yet alive; and, should he die," said he, "do thou see that his burial mound be heaped for him; and that a standing-stone be set up in memory of him; and let his name be written upon it in letters of Ogham." Then the king went away for the space of a year, to make his royal progress throughout the realm of Ire-

land, and Ailill was left behind, in the stronghold of Frémain of Tethba; there to pass away and to die.

Now upon a certain day that followed, the Lady Etain came to the house where Ailill lay in his sickness, and thus she spoke to him: "What is it," she said, "that ails thee? thy sickness is great, and if we but knew anything that would content thee, thou shouldest have it." It was thus that at that time she spoke, and she sang a verse of a song, and Ailill in song made answer to her.

[In a verse dialogue between Ailill and Etain, Ailill declares that his great love for her is the cause of his illness. Etain is greatly troubled thereby, and some days later, moved by her sympathy, agrees to a tryst with Ailill to take place at the break of day at a place outside of the fort. At the time appointed for the tryst Ailill lay in heavy slumber. Etain, however, went to the tryst. Soon she saw a man coming, and he was in the likeness of Ailill, weary and feeble, but Etain knew that he was not Ailill, and she continued to wait. Finally she came back from her tryst. When Ailill awoke, he was in great sadness and grief and thought that he would rather die than live. Then Etain came to speak to him, and arranged for a tryst on the morrow. But on the morrow the affair happened as on the previous day — each day came that man to her tryst. And she came again upon the last day appointed for the tryst, and the same man met her. Etain thereupon asked the man who he was, and why he was here. The man replied that he was Midir of Bri Leith, and further told her that, when she was Etain of the Horses and the daughter of Ailill, he had been her husband.]

"And what made thee to part from me, if we were as thou sayest?" said Etain. "Easy again is the answer," said Mider; "it was the sorcery of Fuamnach and the spells of Bressal Etarlam that put us apart." And Mider said to Etain: "Wilt thou come with me?"

"Nay," answered Etain, "I will not exchange the king of all Ireland for thee; for a man whose kindred and whose lineage is unknown." "It was I myself indeed," said Mider, "who filled all the mind of Ailill with love for thee: it was I also who prevented his coming to the tryst with thee, and allowed him not thine honor to spoil it."

After all this the lady went back to her house, and she came to speech with Ailill, and she greeted him. "It hath happened well for us both," said Ailill, "that the man met thee there: for I am cured forever from my illness, thou also art unhurt in thine honor, and may a blessing rest upon thee!" "Thanks be to our gods," said Etain, "that both of us do indeed deem that all this hath chanced so well." And after that Eochaid came back from his royal progress, and he asked at once for his brother; and the tale was told to him from the beginning to the end, and the king was grateful to Etain,

in that she had been gracious to Ailill; and, "What hath been related in this tale," said Eochaid, "is well-pleasing to ourselves."

And, for the after history of Eochaid and Etain, it is told that once when Eochaid was in Frémain, at such time as the people had prepared for themselves a great gathering and certain horse-races; thither also to that assembly came Etain, that she might see the sight. Thither also came Mider, and he searched through that assembly to find out where Etain might be; and he found Etain, and her women around her, and he bore her away with him, also one of her handmaidens, called Crochen the Ruddy: hideous was the form in which Mider approached them. And the wives of the men of Ireland raised cries of woe, as the queen was carried off from among them; and the horses of Ireland were loosed to pursue Mider, for they knew not whether it was into the air or into the earth he had gone. But, as for Mider, the course that he had taken was the road to the west, even to the plain of Croghan; and as he came thither, "How shall it profit us," said Crochen the Ruddy, "this journey of ours to this plain?" "Forevermore," said Mider, "shall thy name be over all this plain": and hence cometh the name of the plain of Croghan, and of the Fort of Croghan. Then Mider came to the Fairy Mound of Croghan; for the dwellers in that mound were allied to him, and his friends; and for nine days they lingered there, banqueting and feasting; so that "Is this the place where thou makest thy home?" said Crochen to Mider. "Eastwards from this is my dwelling," Mider answered her; "nearer to the rising-place of the sun"; and Mider, taking Etain with him, departed, and came to Bri Leith, where the son of Celthar had his palace.

Now just at the time when they came to this palace, King Eochaid sent out from him the horsemen of Ireland, also his wizards, and his officers who had the care of the roads, and the couriers of the boundaries, that they might search through Ireland, and find out where his wife might be; and Eochaid himself wandered throughout Ireland to seek for his wife; and for a year from that day until the same day upon the year that followed he searched, and he found nothing to profit him.

Then, at the last, King Eochaid sent for his Druid, and he set to him the task to seek for Etain; now the name of the Druid was Dalan. And Dalan came before him upon that day; and he went westwards, until he came to the mountain that was after that known as Slieve Dalan; and he remained there upon that night. And the Druid deemed it a grievous thing that Etain should be hidden from him for the space of one year, and thereupon he made three wands of yew; and upon the wands he wrote an ogham; and by the keys of wisdom that he had, and by the ogham, it was revealed to him that Etain was in the fairy mound of Bri Leith, and that Mider had borne her thither.

Then Dalan the Druid turned him, and went back to the east; and he came to the stronghold of Frémain, even to the place where the king of Ire-

land was; and Eochaid asked from the Druid his news. Thither also came the horsemen, and the wizards, and the officers who had the care of the roads, and the couriers of the boundaries, to the king of Ireland, and he asked them what tidings they had, and whether they had found news of Midir and Etain. And they said that they had found nothing at all; until at the last said his Druid to him: "A great evil hath smitten thee, also shame, and misfortune, on account of the loss of thy wife. Do thou assemble the warriors of Ireland, and depart to Bri Leith, where is the palace of the son of Celthar; let that palace be destroyed by thy hand, and there thou shalt find thy wife: by persuasion or by force do thou take her thence."

Then Eochaid and the men of Ireland marched to Bri Leith, and they set themselves to destroy that fairy dwelling, and to demand that Etain be brought to them, and they brought her not. Then they ruined that fairy dwelling, and they brought Etain out from it; and she returned to Frémain, and there she had all the worship that a king of Ireland can bestow, fair wedded love and affection, such as was her due from Eochaid Airemm. . . .

[In other versions of this legend the story of Midir's abduction of Etain and the destruction of the fairy-knoll is replaced by an episode according to which Midir, richly appareled, appears at Tara, and by beating Eochaid in a game of chess, wins the right to take Etain in his arms. As soon as he passed his right arm about her, he bore her away through the skylight, and, in the shape of two swans, Midir and Etain flew toward the fairy-knoll of Femun. Eochaid with an army of men went and dug up the elf-mounds, in order that he might rescue his wife. Midir opposed him with a large army, and for nine years there was war between them. Finally, when Eochaid's diggers came to the borders of the fairy palace, Midir sent to the side of the palace sixty women all in the shape of Etain. Eochaid himself was deceived, and chose, instead of Etain, Etain's daughter, Messbuachalla. Later, when he learned that he had been deceived, he returned to sack the palace, and Etain, having made herself known to him, returned with him to abide thereafter at Tara.]

Translated by A. N. Leahy

## MEDIEVAL IRISH POETRY

## DEIRDRE'S FAREWELL TO SCOTLAND

A BELOVED land is yon land in the east,  
 I would not have come hither out of it,  
 Alba with its marvels.  
 Had I not come with Noisi.

Beloved are Dun Fidga and Dun Finn,  
 Beloved is the fortress above them,  
 Beloved is the Isle of the Thorn-bush,  
 And beloved is Dun Sweeny.

Caill Cuan!  
 Unto which Ainnle would go, alas!  
 Short we thought the time there,  
 Noisi and I in the land of Alba.

Glen Lay!  
 There I used to sleep under a shapely rock.  
 Fish and venison and badger's fat,  
 That was my portion in Glen Lay.

Glen Massan!  
 Tall is its wild garlic, white are its stalks:  
 We used to have a broken sleep  
 On the grassy river-mouth of Massan.

Glen Etive!  
 There I raised my first house.  
 Delightful its house! when we rose in the morning  
 A sunny cattle-fold was Glen Etive.

Glen Urchain!  
 That was the straight, fair-ridged glen!  
 Never was man of his age prouder  
 Than Noisi in Glen Urchain.

Glen Da Ruadh!  
 Hail to him who hath it as an heritage!  
 Sweet is the cuckoo's voice on bending branch  
 On the peak above Glen Da Ruadh.

Beloved is Draighen over a firm beach!  
 Beloved its water in pure sand!  
 I would never have left it, from the east,  
 Had I not come with my beloved.

AN EVEN-SONG

Patrick Sang This

**M**AY Thy holy angels, O Christ, son of living God,  
 Guard our sleep, our rest, our shining bed.

Let them reveal true visions to us in our sleep,  
 O high-prince of the universe, O great king of the mysteries!

May no demons, no ill, no calamity or terrifying dreams  
 Disturb our rest, our willing, prompt repose.

May our watch be holy, our work, our task,  
 Our sleep, our rest without let, without break.

SONG OF SUMMER

**S**UMMER-TIME, season supreme!  
 Splendid is color then.  
 Blackbirds sing a full lay  
 If there be a slender shaft of day.

The dust-colored cuckoo calls aloud:  
 Welcome, splendid summer!  
 The bitterness of bad weather is past,  
 The boughs of the wood are a thicket.

Panic startles the heart of the deer,  
 The smooth sea runs apace —  
 Season when ocean sinks asleep,  
 Blossom covers the world.

Bees with puny strength carry  
 A goodly burden, the harvest of blossoms;  
 Up the mountain-side kine take with them mud,  
 The ant makes a rich meal.

The harp of the forest sounds music,  
 The sail gathers — perfect peace;  
 Color has settled on every height,  
 Haze on the lake of full waters.

The corncrake, a strenuous bard, discourses,  
 The lofty cold waterfall sings  
 A welcome to the warm pool —  
 The talk of the rushes has come.

Light swallows dart aloft,  
 Loud melody encircles the hill,  
 The soft rich mast buds,  
 The stuttering quagmire prattles.

The peat-bog is as the raven's coat,  
 The loud cuckoo bids welcome,  
 The speckled fish leaps —  
 Strong is the bound of the swift warrior.

Man flourishes, the maiden buds  
 In her fair strong pride.  
 Perfect each forest from top to ground,  
 Perfect each great stately plain.

Delightful is the season's splendor,  
 Rough winter has gone:  
 Every fruitful wood shines white,  
 A joyous peace is summer.

A flock of birds settles  
 In the midst of meadows,  
 The green field rustles,  
 Wherein is a brawling white stream.

A wild longing is on you to race horses,  
 The ranked host is ranged around:  
 A bright shaft has been shot into the land,  
 So that the water-flag is gold beneath it.

A timorous, tiny, persistent little fellow  
 Sings at the top of his voice,  
 The lark sings clear tidings:  
 Surpassing summer-time of delicate hues!

SUMMER IS GONE

**M**Y tidings for you: the stag bells,  
Winter snows, summer is gone.

Wind high and cold, low the sun,  
Short his course, sea running high.

Deep-red the bracken, its shape all gone —  
The wild-goose has raised his wonted cry.

Cold has caught the wings of birds;  
Season of ice — these are my tidings.

A SONG OF WINTER

**C**OLD, cold!  
Cold tonight is broad Moylurg,  
Higher the snow than the mountain-range,  
The deer cannot get at their food.

Cold till Doom!  
The storm has spread over all:  
A river is each furrow upon the slope,  
Each ford a full pool.

A great tidal sea is each loch,  
A full loch is each pool:  
Horses cannot get over the ford of Ross,  
No more can two feet get there.

The fish of Ireland are a-roaming,  
There is no strand which the wave does not pound,  
Not a town there is in the land,  
Not a bell is heard, no crane talks.

The wolves of Cuan-wood get  
Neither rest nor sleep in their lair,  
The little wren cannot find  
Shelter in her nest on the slope of Lon.

Keen wind and cold ice  
 Has burst upon the little company of birds,  
 The blackbird cannot get a lee to her liking,  
 Shelter for its side in Cuan-wood.

Cosy our pot on its hook,  
 Crazy the hut on the slope of Lon:  
 The snow has crushed the wood here,  
 Toilsome to climb up Ben-bo.

Glenn Rye's ancient bird  
 From the bitter wind gets grief;  
 Great her misery and her pain,  
 The ice will get into her mouth.

From flock and from down to rise —  
 Take it to heart! — were folly for thee:  
 Ice in heaps on every ford —  
 That is why I say "cold"!

#### THE MONK AND HIS PET CAT

**I** AND my white Pangur  
 Have each his special art:  
 His mind is set on hunting mice,  
 Mine is upon my special craft.

I love to rest — better than any fame! —  
 With close study at my little book;  
 White Pangur does not envy me:  
 He loves his childish play.

When in our house we two are all alone —  
 A tale without tedium!  
 We have — sport never-ending!  
 Something to exercise our wit.

At times by feats of derring-do  
 A mouse sticks in his net,  
 While into my net there drops  
 A difficult problem of hard meaning.

He points his full shining eye  
Against the fence of the wall:  
I point my clear though feeble eye  
Against the keenness of science.

He rejoices with quick leaps  
When in his sharp claw sticks a mouse:  
I too rejoice when I have grasped  
A problem difficult and dearly loved.

Though we are thus at all times,  
Neither hinders the other,  
Each of us pleased with his own art  
Amuses himself alone.

He is a master of the work  
Which every day he does:  
While I am at my own work  
To bring difficulty to clearness.

THE SCRIBE

A HEDGE of trees surrounds me,  
A blackbird's lay sings to me;  
Above my lined booklet  
The trilling birds chant to me.

In a gray mantle from the top of bushes  
The cuckoo sings:  
Verily — may the Lord shield me! —  
Well do I write under the greenwood.

THE PILGRIM AT ROME

TO go to Rome  
Is much of trouble, little of profit:  
The King whom thou seekest here,  
Unless thou bring Him with thee, thou wilt not find.

## THE VIKING TERROR

**B**ITTER is the wind tonight,  
 It tosses the ocean's white hair:  
 Tonight I fear not the fierce warriors of Norway  
 Coursing on the Irish Sea.

## CORMAC MAC CULENNAIN SANG THIS

**S**HALL I launch my dusky little coracle  
 On the broad-bosomed glorious ocean?  
 Shall I go, O King of bright Heaven,  
 Of my own will upon the brine?

Whether it be roomy or narrow,  
 Whether it be served by crowds of hosts —  
 O God, wilt Thou stand by me  
 When it comes upon the angry sea?

Translations of Medieval Irish Poems by Kuno Meyer

## WELSH LITERATURE

THE oldest literature of Wales is as cloud-wrapped as the peaks of Plymlymmon, Cader Idris, and Snowdon. The four ancient names — Merddin, Taliessin, Aneirin, and Llywarch Hen — were they indeed bards of the sixth century, or were they as mythical as Orpheus and Apollo? Are the poems attributed to these *cynfeirdd*, or early bards, by any possibility works of the sixth century? And what is the meaning of these highly allusive and elusive stanzas?

In his fundamental study of Taliessin Sir John Morris-Jones has shown that many of the poems found in the thirteenth century 'Book of Taliessin' are, as tradition had asserted, indeed work of the sixth century. To be sure, in the intervening period copyists had modernized the language, but in the main they preserved the words and the meaning of the bard whom they revered. We may therefore take the allusions to Uryen, Owein, and Rhun as the actual tributes of a grateful poet to his patrons. For these are historic characters, and it would seem that Taliessin was a real person, born in the valley of the Conway, who was attached for a time to the court of Rhun in North Wales, and at other times to that of Uryen, Prince of Rheged in Scotland, and his son Owein. He mourns the death of Rhun, who gave him milch kine in summer, horses in winter, sparkling wine and oil, and a guard of serfs against ill omen. He praises Uryen: "Mead out of horns and good things without stint have I received from the best prince, the most generous I have heard of." He chants an elegy over Owein the son of Uryen: "A noble man was he above his many-colored trappings, who gave horses to his suitors. Before he would lay up a hoard like a miser, it was distributed for the good of his soul." The battle-pieces are spirited, real. To quote from Sir John Morris-Jones: "In 'Gweith Gwen Ystrat' we have glimpses of the battle at different stages, so vivid that the mind instinctively fills in the details. The invaders come in hosts like waves rolling over the land; in the morning battle they are cut up; the remnant defend the valley; weary, they lay down their arms — the hoary weirs behind them; they make peace, hand on cross; they name their hostages; the waves wash the tails of their horses." There is every reason to believe, then, that these poems are essentially devoted to the glorification of the British kings of the middle and latter half of the sixth century, when Uryen and Owein in the North were fighting with the sons of Ida, the Anglian rulers of Bernicia. Probably the historical poems of Taliessin were handed down among the bards of Strathclyde and Cumbria, and when after 655 the Anglian advance forced the Britons south into Wales, they brought their poetic heritage with them.

Another ancient poem, the 'Gododdin,' telling of "old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago," is concerned with the North. Like many other survivals of primitive literature an anthology rather than a unit, it probably incorporates fragments from the war-chants of many generations; but its central event is the Battle of Catraeth, fought in 570, between the Britons and Scots on the one side and the Saxons of Deira and Bernicia and the Picts of Guotodin on the other. It consists of a long series of stanzas praising the heroism of the chieftains who went down to death and defeat in that battle.

Besides the poems of panegyric and battle there are certain other types to be found in the poetry attributed to the *cynfeirdd*. The prophetic stanzas attached to the name of Merddin are probably twelfth-century fabrications, arising out of his reputation as a prophet, and like most prophecies are *ex post facto*. Taliessin is credited with certain mythological poems of uncertain date. One of them, the 'Harryings of Annwn,' tells of a fabulous expedition of Arthur's to the land of the gods in his ship Prydwen to carry away the caldron of its chief. [See 'The Legends of Arthur and the Round Table.'] To Taliessin, moreover, there clings the ancient Celtic doctrine of transformation or rebirth, mentioned by Lucan as taught by the druids. The Irish ascribed to the poet Amairgen verses in which he identifies himself with the wind, the wave, the bull, and the eagle; and one of the poems attributed to Taliessin tells of similar transformations which the bard has undergone in his past. This tradition is doubtless at the root of the sixteenth century composition which Lady Guest included in her book as the "Tale of Taliessin."

In the laws of Howel Dda, codified on the model of Anglo-Saxon systems shortly before his death in 950, we learn something of the status of the bard. The highest rank was the throned bard, and next was that of the palace bard. The latter was entitled to sit always at the king's table and on the three principal feasts to sit at his side. If the queen wished a song, the bard of the palace chanted the song of the battle of Camlan, but softly, for fear of disturbing those in the hall. In the division of the spoils after battle the bard had the next pick, after the king had received his share.

While the transmission of the ancient poetry was a function of the bardic order, the transmission of the ancient stories seems to have belonged to a different class, the *cyfarwyddon*. The collection of their work which Lady Guest translated and published as the 'Mabinogion' is far from homogeneous. Except for the 'Taliessin,' which is comparatively late, the tales are found in manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, chief of which are the 'Red Book of Hergest,' used by Lady Guest, and the 'White Book of Rhydderch.' Although Lady Guest mistakenly applied the name 'Mabinogion' to all the tales and so established the practice of referring to any one of them by the singular *mabinogi*, only the first four are actually called in the manuscripts 'The Four Branches of the Mabinogi.' Most Welsh scholars are now agreed that the word *mabinogi* means the story of a hero's youth and practi-

cally corresponds to the French *enfances* and the Irish *macgnimarta*. The word has been extended in the 'Four Branches' to cover everything from the hero's conception to his death, but he remains a youthful hero. In the first branch Gwri, or, as he is later called, Pryderi, is born and fostered, inherits the kingdom and marries; in the second he is barely mentioned; in the third he is imprisoned by enchantment and released; and in the fourth he is slain in battle. These four branches are largely localized in Dyfed and Gwynedd in Western Wales, and represent the blended traditions of these regions, where for many centuries Goidels or men of Irish stock had been settled beside Britons or Welshmen. Naturally enough these stories are filled with Irish motifs.

The great fascination of the 'Four Branches' lies in the fact that they preserve, in however disintegrated a form, the mythology of pagan Wales. Manawyddan son of Llyr, for example, is no other than the Irish Manannan son of Ler, god of the sea, and he is described as one who surpassed in craftsmanship all the saddle-makers, shield-makers, shoemakers, and farmers of England, probably because he was thought of as the divine patron of those crafts. Rhiannon, his spouse, goes back to a Celtic goddess Rigantona, "the Great Queen." Bran, who appears like a moving mountain as he wades across the Irish Sea, his eyes like two lakes on the mountain-side, represents the primitive conception of a god. Arawn, a king of Annwn, appears hunting with his shining white, red-eared hounds, and his palace is described as the most beautiful ever seen and the best supplied with food and drink, vessels of gold, and royal jewels. Even the author seems to realize that he is dealing with pre-Christian material, for he never speaks of marriage; and of Blodeuwedd he says that "they baptized her with the baptism which they practised at that time." These stories, then, though set down in the thirteenth century, are precious survivals of the druidic tradition which flourished a thousand years before. They, like the transformation poems, afford eloquent testimony to the toleration which Celtic Christianity extended to the lore of paganism.

But even the enthusiast for Celtic mythology must be oppressed at times by the sense that the *cyfarwydd*, or story-teller, has not given us the original traditions with their original meanings. Bran has been reduced from divinity to the kingship of Britain. A misunderstanding of his title, "The Noble Head," has led to the concoction of a strange story of the joyous feasting of Bran's followers for eighty-seven years, not in the presence of their chief, but in the presence of his severed head. And we get the naïve addition: "It was not more irksome to them having the head with them, than if Blessed Bran had been with them himself." In the first Branch we get a clear example of distortion where we read that when Rhiannon's attendants accused her of devouring her own new-born son, she was condemned to sit near the horse-block at the palace gate, and offer to carry strangers on her back into the palace. A meaningless punishment, until we note that her son had been

snatched away by a giant claw and set down in the place of a new-born foal. The story now becomes consistent and meaningful if we suppose that this foal had been set down beside Rhiannon in exchange for her child. The accusation of her attendants, then, was that she had given birth to the colt, and her humiliation to the office of a mare naturally followed. The tales in the 'Mabinogion' were once logical enough, but a strange tendency to interweave the strands of different stories has made a fascinating puzzle of what might have been a noble literature.

The best illustration of this confusion is 'Math the Son of Mathonwy.' This tangled tale has been brilliantly unraveled by Professor Gruffydd and shown to be made up of threads from the famous Irish myth of Balor and his grandson Lug. It was prophesied that Balor could never be slain unless it were with a particular spear in the hands of a grandson named Lug, on the latter's wedding night. In order to prevent this, Balor first takes measures to see that his daughter has no son and keeps her imprisoned. But Cian obtains access to her by magic, and she bears a son. Balor now sends the boy to be drowned but he is rescued and brought to his father. Balor, learning of the survival of his grandson, tries to prevent the fulfilment of his destiny by swearing that the boy shall never receive a name except from himself, shall never bear arms, and never be wedded. By a ruse Cian inveigles Balor into naming the boy Lug Lamfada. Balor then contrives to slay Cian, but Lug waits the hour to avenge his father's death. When, on his wedding night, he sees Balor standing on Muin Duv removing the shields from his one eye, Lug hurls the spear and slays Balor.

Now this myth of Balor and Lug is coherent and well-motivated, but it seems as if sheer perversity alone could have so completely disguised the point in every incident of the Welsh derivative. Math keeps his feet in the lap of a virgin, but she is not his daughter. She is violated in Math's absence, but nothing is ever heard of her child. Instead the infant son of another woman is suddenly intruded upon us, Llew, who corresponds to the Irish Lug. It is not his grandfather who swears the destinies upon Llew that he shall get no name except from him, never bear arms, and never wed wife; it is his mother who does so, and she of course has no motive. Finally it is not his grandfather whom Llew slays with a particular spear in a particular position, but his rival in love. No wonder that the 'Four Branches' are baffling when the parts and characters have been shuffled so promiscuously.

'Kilhwch and Olwen' affords a glimpse of a later development in Welsh tradition, but only a glimpse of what must have been an enormous treasury of adventure, magic, and pageantry. It reveals a fragment of the Welsh legend of Arthur before it was passed on to the Cornish, Bretons, and French, to emerge as Arthurian romance. [See 'The Legends of Arthur and the Round Table.'] Three of the divine figures from the 'Four Branches' are named in 'Kilhwch' among Arthur's warriors, as well as Conchobar, Fergus, Loe-

gaire, Conall, and Curoi from Ireland. Even Lug is there as Llwch Llawyn-nawc or Llenlleawc the Irishman. There are also Brythonic heroes such as Bedwyr, Kai, Edern the son of Nudd, better known as Bedivere, Kay, and Ider son of Nu. Gildas the historian and Taliessin the bard rub shoulders in Arthur's court with Gwevyl, a figure like those in Mandeville's 'Travels,' who would let one of his lips drop below his waist while he turned up the other like a cap over his head; and a number of folk-lore figures of the helpful companion type: the Sucker who could dry up the sea, the Hearer who though buried seven cubits below ground could hear the ant rising in the morning fifty miles away!

To this conglomerate court of Arthur's comes Kilhwch to seek help in his suit for Olwen the daughter of Yspaddaden Penkawr, and with this strange company he arrives to demand the damsel of her father, a giant with overhanging eyebrows. Yspaddaden thrice essays treacherously to slay Kilhwch with a poisoned dart, but finally agrees to yield the damsel if Kilhwch will carry through a long series of impossible tasks. Chief of these is to fetch the razor, comb, and scissors between the ears of the great boar Twrch Trwyth. Much of the remainder of the tale is concerned with the various preliminary measures to be taken to hunt the boar and his pigs and with the progress of the chase from Ireland through South Wales and down into Cornwall. Here the three objects are finally seized, they are brought back, Yspaddaden is decapitated, and Olwen won.

'Kilhwch and Olwen,' though it is a composite like the 'Four Branches,' possesses a much higher literary interest. The plot flows on without running into sand; the motivation is comparatively clear; there are grim touches of humor, rare grotesques, and vivid coloring.

Another Arthurian tale is 'The Dream of Rhonabwy,' which was probably written down about 1175. It is a curious pageant that passes before our eyes, described down to the minutest detail: "The belt of the sword was of yellow goldwork, having a clasp upon it of the eyelid of a black sea-horse." But point or plot there seems to be none; it is indeed a dream, with all the incoherence and all the vividness of dreaming. To judge by the colophon, the particular details of horses, arms, scarfs, and jewels constituted a sort of memory test.

Another and far more delightful tale, 'The Dream of Maxen Wledig,' tells how a certain emperor of Rome named Maxen (the historic Maximus) dreams of crossing seas and islands, entering a castle of which the hall was roofed with gold, and embracing a maiden as bright as the sun, cheek to cheek; and then he awakes. He sends messengers to Carnarvon to demand her as his bride, and then sets out himself, conquering Britain on his way. The damsel turns out to be Helen, probably a fairy lady by whose orders the old Roman roads of Britain were long afterward said to have been built. When a revolt breaks out in Rome, Maxen returns and with the help of Helen's

brothers regains his throne. The same story, without the fairy and dream elements, and with many differences, appears in Geoffrey of Monmouth, and seems to have been a romance woven at a late date about a fragment of the history of the Emperor Maximus.

The last group in the 'Mabinogion' consists of three Arthurian romances: 'Geraint,' 'The Lady of the Fountain,' and 'Peredur.' Practically all scholars agree that these are Welsh redactions of Continental romances, and it is certain that they correspond more or less closely, in outline, to three poems by Chrestien de Troyes. It is natural, then, to assume that Chrestien is their source, but a close scrutiny shows that this view is impossible and that probably the common source lies in three popular Breton tales. At any rate, we are in a far more chivalric, less fantastic world, than in 'Kilhwch.' There is no clear mythical significance, less interest in localization. 'Geraint,' so well known in Tennyson's version, is an almost completely rationalized story of contemporary life. Little is characteristically Celtic except the names of persons and places, the hunting of the white stag, and the heads mounted on stakes. 'The Lady of the Fountain' retains much more of the primitive. Its hero is the historic Owein son of Uryen, but all the rest is fanciful. The first part, where Kynon first and Owein later sally forth in search of adventure, are entertained in the castle of the Yellow Man, and then encounter the Black Knight at the fountain, is based on the Irish story of Cuchulinn's contending with Conall and Loegaire for the Champion's Portion, their going to Yellow Son of Fair for judgment, and then being sent on to Terror Son of Great Fear. The Giant Herdsman, too, is an uncanny figure from the Celtic Other World. But there is more than the fascination of strange adventure; there are living characters, conflicts of passion, realistic detail, and a well-knit sequence of incidents. 'Peredur' is inferior to these in literary art, is in fact a pretty crude patch-work; but it possesses an undying interest as a version of the story of Perceval and the Grail, which has reached its highest expression in Wagner's 'Parsifal.' And here indeed are the well-known elements; the youth brought up in the forest ignorant of chivalry, his first visit to the mysterious castle of the Lame King, his failure to ask the meaning of its wonders, the Loathly Damsel, the second visit to the Castle of the Lame King, and its successful termination. The Welsh version is obviously corrupt, and one of the most perplexing of the corruptions is the fact that instead of the Grail, which means "a rather deep dish," we have a large salver, containing the bleeding head of Peredur's cousin. Whence came the head into the salver? We can only guess.

The triads dealing with the mythic and romantic traditions of Wales have no literary worth, but they serve to show how great a mass of literature we have lost. Like their Irish counterparts, the Welsh triads are short lists of three persons or objects possessing some common property or distinction. They are of varying date and authenticity, one group indeed being largely fabricated.

Among the more authentic are some relating to Arthur. There were three costly pillaging expeditions in the Isle of Britain. "The first took place when Medrawd went to Arthur's court at Kelliwic in Cornwall; he left neither food nor drink in the court; he consumed everything; he drew Gwenhwyvar from her royal chair and buffeted her. The second was when Arthur went to Medrawd's court; he left neither food nor drink in the court nor in the district. The third was when Aeddan, the traitor, went to Alclut (Dumbarton) to the court of Rhydderch Hael; after him there was left neither drink nor beast alive." Trystan is mentioned in several triads, and in one is awarded, together with Pryderi, the somewhat dubious glory of inclusion among the three great swineherds of Britain. He kept watch over the pigs of King March, while the professional swineherd went on a message to Essyllt. Arthur, March, Kei, and Bedwyr came together, endeavoring to steal some of the swine from the amateur Trystan, but could not escape with a single pigling. It is worthy of note that we have also a short romance of Trystan and Essyllt; though the earliest manuscript dates from 1550, the story reveals itself as intermediate between the ancient Irish traditions of Diarmaid and Grainne and the French romance of Tristan.

One should not forget to mention the literary activity of three Welshmen, who took advantage of the absorption of Wales into the Anglo-Norman state to make a name for themselves with the larger audience and through the medium of the universal language of the Middle Ages, Latin. Geoffrey of Monmouth by the liberal use of his imagination and miscellaneous learning contrived to make out of a Breton book what purported to be an early history of Britain, embellished with all the ornaments of Latin style, and succeeded through this 'History of the Kings of Britain' in making the past of his own defeated race so glorious that Norman and Saxon promptly relinquished their own racial traditions to share those of the Britons. Arthur thus was raised to a position equal to Charlemagne's among the learned classes. [See 'The Legends of Arthur and the Round Table.'] Walter Map is credited with the composition of the French 'Prose Lancelot,' and some scholars are willing to concede that, though in the form in which we have it it is certainly not his, he may well have written, on the basis of earlier tales and poems, the nucleus of the great prose romance. He was certainly the author of an anecdotic collection called 'De Nugis Curialium' [The Trifles of a Courtier]. And there is Giraldus Cambrensis, like Walter Map a courtier, like Geoffrey of Monmouth a lecturer at Oxford, who has left us in his books valuable descriptions of the Wales and Ireland of his time.

As the period of the *cynfeirdd* or early bards, with their highly allusive, mysterious battle-pieces and elegies and transcendental raptures, is followed by that of the *cyfarwyddon* or tellers of prose tales, represented by the 'Mabinogion,' so that is followed by the period of the *gogynfeirdd* or the lyric poets, who flourished from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. The usual

warlike themes and the praises of patrons are interspersed with lyrics of love and nature. In the twelfth century we have Gwalchmai, from whom Gray translated 'The Triumphs of Owen'; the prince, Owain Kyfeiliog, author of 'The Hirlas Horn,' a drinking piece in celebration of victory; and the prince, Howel ab Owain, warrior, patriot, and lover. In the fifteenth century there is Iolo Goch, voicing the spirit of liberty in his 'Cywydd to a Laborer' and in his devotion to the cause of Owen Glendower; and Dafydd ap Edmwnd, the formalist.

The greatest of the *gogynfeirdd*, Dafydd ab Gwilym, was born about 1340 and died about fifty years later; thus Welsh medieval poetry attained its peak at just the same time as did English. Dafydd's life is known to us in some detail because of his own realistic tendency and the interest which he inspired in his contemporaries. Though traditions vary as to his birthplace, the most plausible assigns it to Bro Gynin in Cardiganshire. He was brought up at the court of his maternal uncle, the lord of Cardigan, handsome, liberal, himself a bard in several languages. When this uncle was murdered, the young poet was taken up by another kinsman, Ifor Hael, "the Generous," of Glamorgan, and he never ceased to celebrate the generosity of Ifor and the beauty of Glamorgan. This generosity reached the point that when Ifor's daughter fell in love with the young poet, who was her tutor, Ifor packed the girl off to a nunnery, but retained Ab Gwilym as steward of his household. Several odes which the poet has left, addressed to a nun, were probably inspired by the brown-eyed Gwenonwy. Another hapless love affair moved Ab Gwilym to song before he saw and won as his bride the stately, smiling Morfydd, with her tresses as yellow as the mountain broom. They were wedded under the greenwood tree by the bard Madog Benfras, and enjoyed a brief happiness. But Morfydd's parents seem to have regarded such a non-ecclesiastical rite as invalid, and promptly seized the opportunity when Ab Gwilym was away to marry Morfydd with orthodox ceremonial to one always referred to in the poems as Bwa Bach, "the Little Hunchback." But the poet remained a devoted lover, sent Morfydd ode after ode, met her in the forest, or endeavored to steal into the Bwa Bach's castle despite the "three porters," a barking dog, a creaking door, and a wakeful carlin. For a time indeed he and his love evaded the vigilance of her husband, found protection with Ifor Hael, and lived blissfully together once more. But the scandal was too great, apparently, for Morfydd was sent back to the Bwa Bach. Dafydd outlived his love and his protector, and in his 'Last Ode' he wrote: "Ifor my councillor, Nest who was my protection, and Morfydd my idol, all lie beneath the green sward, whilst I remain in life oppressed by the cold load of old age. I sing no more. No longer do I offer song to the woods, and no longer can I delight in the songs of a nightingale and cuckoo, nor in the kiss of a gentle maiden, nor in her speech and voice that I loved. . . . The end of life and death draw near and the grave is prepared for me. Christ will be my aid and

my support." The place of his burial is unknown, not because he passed un-honored from the world but because more spots than one claim the honor.

It is natural that a poet whose life was a romance of passion and whose poetry was so largely concerned with the fleeting beauty of this world should have incurred the censures of the religious. But he defiantly proclaims his credo: "God is not so cruel as old men affirm. It is the priests, reading their moldy sheepskins, who tell us lies. God will never damn a good man's soul for love of wife or maid. There be three things loved the world over, women, sunshine, and health. Even in heaven, woman will be the fairest flower next to God himself. . . . From heaven comes all delight, all sadness from hell. . . . When men shall be as glad to hear a prayer as they are to hear a song, and the maidens of Gwynedd to hear a ballad of love, I will sing paternosters without ceasing. Until then, confusion take me if I sing any but a love-song."

But Ab Gwilym was more than a writer of amatory odes, and he could see beauty in much besides the maidens of Gwynedd. Many of his odes to Morfydd show quite as much interest in the messengers whom he sends to her as in the message or Morfydd. And though George Borrow characteristically underestimates Ab Gwilym's devotion to the lady, there is much truth in his eloquent apostrophe: "A strange songster was that who, pretending to be captivated by every woman he saw, was, in reality, in love with nature alone — wild, beautiful, solitary nature — her mountains and cascades, her forests and streams, her birds, fishes, and wild animals. Go to, Ab Gwilym, with thy pseudo-amatory odes, to Morfydd, or this or that other lady, fair or ugly; little didst thou care for any of them, Dame Nature was thy love, however thou mayest seek to disguise the truth. Yes, yes, send thy love-message to Morfydd, the fair wanton. By whom dost thou send it, I would know? by the salmon, forsooth, which haunts the rushing streams! the glorious salmon which bounds and gambols in the flashing water, and whose ways and circumstances thou so well describest — see, there he hurries upwards through the flashing water. Halloo! what a glimpse of glory — but where is Morfydd the while? What, another message to the wife of Bwa Bach? Ay, truly; and by whom? — the wind! the swift wind, the rider of the world, whose course is not to be stayed; who gallops o'er the mountain, and, when he comes to the broadest river, asks neither for boat nor ferry; who has described the wind so well — his speed and power? But where is Morfydd, the wanton, the wife of the Bwa Bach; thou art waiting her beneath the tall trees, amidst the underwood; but she comes not; no Morfydd is there. Quite right, Ab Gwilym; what wantest thou with Morfydd? But another form is nigh at hand, that of red Reynard, who, seated upon his chine at the mouth of his cave, looks very composedly at thee; thou startest, bendest thy bow. Go to, thou carest neither for thy bow nor for Morfydd, thou merely seekest an opportunity to speak of Reynard; and who has described him like thee? the brute with the sharp shrill cry, the black reverse of melody, whose face sometimes wears a smile like the

devil's in the Evangile. . . . Go to, Ab Gwilym, thou wast a wiser and a better man than thou wouldst fain have had people believe."

Because it is hardly to be hoped that the number of those who understand Welsh will greatly increase, and translations of lyric poetry are notoriously inadequate, Ab Gwilym will never receive his due from the world of letters. The same unjust fate awaits the many other vigorous and interesting figures that have succeeded him. For Welsh literature and the Welsh language are far from defunct, in spite of the enormous social, official, and cultural pressure which its rival, English, has exerted upon it. The translation of the Bible into Welsh in 1588 by Bishop William Morgan furnished a standard of literary prose. Ellis Wyn (1671-1734) reached an even higher level of excellence in his translations and adaptations of religious works. Goronwy Owen (1722-1769) revived the old poetic meters. Twm o'r Nant (1739-1810) wrote many popular interludes and ballads. Daniel Owen (1836-1895) is the national novelist. Meanwhile the Nonconformist chapels and Sunday Schools have kept the language alive and adapted it to the expression of ideas. The *eisteddfodau* with their ritual processions and prizes have encouraged the study and the emulation of the past, and stimulated poetry, singing, and drama. In fact it may be said of Wales as of few civilized countries that its national festivals are centered not about war or politics but about learning and the arts. It is natural that in such a country three of its chief scholars, Sir John Morris-Jones, Professor Gwynn Jones, and Professor W. J. Gruffydd, should also be its outstanding poets.

ROGER SHERMAN LOOMIS

### FROM THE 'GODODDIN'

(Attributed to Aneirin)

**S**HACKLED and sore am I,  
 vengeance no more is mine,  
 no more may I laugh a laugh,  
 fettered of feet, I pine;  
 stretched are my limbs  
 in an earthen keep,  
 with an iron chain  
 round my knees, I weep,  
 I, who once drank deep  
 with the host at Catraeth slain!  
 I, Neirin, yet, not I alone —  
 for Taliessin knows  
 the like of these my woes —

I, once of Gododdin sang the lay,  
before the dawn of ruin's day. . . .

When the tale is told of Catraeth's fate,  
folk shall fall, and their grief be great;  
nobles ignoble strove for the land  
with the sons of Godebawc, a faithful band;  
and the long biers bore the wounded throng;  
'twas a woeful lot, thou relentless Fate,  
that was sworn to Tudvwlch and Kyvwlch the Tall!  
though we drank bright mead in the rushlit hall,  
if its taste was sweet, its hate is long!

The praise of the sacred one, stewards bore  
in aid of the broken fight of fame;  
kindled, 'twas like a consuming flame;  
on Tuesday, their brilliant raiment they wore;  
on Wednesday, they dressed the enameled shield;  
on Thursday, sworn messengers sped;  
on Friday, they counted their dead;  
on Saturday, work of their hands,  
heaped masses covered the field;  
on Sunday, red blades were again sent round;  
knee-deep, on Monday, the red blood ran;  
Gododdin tells, long-wearied and wan,  
when back came the host  
to Mynyddawc's post,  
"out of each hundred, but one is found"! . . .

Torqued, of the forefront, armed for the fray,  
ere the mighty one fell with his noble peers,  
prince in the onset, he led the way,  
and five times fifty fell by his spears;  
of the men in Bernicia and Deira, in one hour,  
a hundred score were hurled  
to the nether world;  
readier his gift for the beast  
than for a wedding feast;  
sooner for ravens he wrought  
than of the altars he thought,  
for the prize of mead in the warrior's hall —  
the glory of minstrels, Hyveidd the Tall! . . .

First of Eochu's tribe, of Eugei's gleaming walls,  
 Gweirydd, whom followed men who were wont to lead,  
 foremost among his folk, in his great and wealthy halls,  
   ever he liberally filled the horns with flowing mead;  
   the best of bragget he brewed and brought,  
     the best of purple gave, and gold,  
   the first of chargers, sleek and bold,  
   converse with him was ever sought;  
 first in raising the shout, and of honored sway,  
 a bear on a host's track, who never gave way.

The lord of two shields, with the speckled casque,  
   and the run of a rushing steed,  
 there were fury and fire on the hill of strife,  
   and his spears were showered with speed;  
 there were food and gain for raven and kite,  
 and though he was left, at Rhydon, bedewed —  
   who had moved like an eagle of stately flight —  
 by the side of the hill, where the wild waves dart,  
 the bards of the world call him valiant of heart;  
 his faith and his counsels were given in vain,  
 and his chieftains driven forth by the main;  
   and ere they laid him still  
   at the foot of Eleirch Hill,  
   in his coffin there was valor indeed  
   and his trappings o'er and o'er  
   were stained with his own gore,  
 Buddvan, son of Bleiddvan, doughtiest of deed! . . .

Sheltering leader of the lines,  
 like the rising sun he shines;  
 monarch — where was his compeer? —  
 of the heaven of Britain's isle;  
 like storm-flood on a ford he spake,  
 or prowling bear in army's wake;  
 in Eiddyn's halls with pageant brave,  
 white foaming cups to kings he gave,  
 the intoxicating mead they filled,  
 and drank the sparkling wines distilled;  
 and there his mowers of the line  
 were wont to drink their honeyed wine;  
 and he the battle-bold, who led,  
 in battle-toil, the reapers red;

and led along by him, the bright,  
they sang, though 'twere the toughest fight!  
battle-decked, and pinion-borne,  
verily, his shield was shorn  
by the leaded darts, and torn;  
and his fellows, fighting, felled  
lead-speared warriors, while he yelled  
hoarsely in the whirl, and then  
blamelessly he paid his men.

But his angry flame was quenched,  
for the greensward hides his dust,  
he, Gwrvelling, the robust! . . .

Men went to Catraeth, went with the dawn,  
and mirth made shorter their passions' sway!  
mead they drank, ensnaring, yellow, sweet,  
for a whole year's length, many a minstrel was gay;  
redder were their blades than their sheaths' pure gold,  
white-enameled shafts, with double barb, they bore,  
in the train of Mynyddawc of noble store.

Men went to Catraeth, famous and bold,  
wine was their drink, and mead out of gold;  
for a whole year's length, they had honor and fee,  
three score, golden torqued, three hundred and three;  
of those who went forth in the madness of mead,  
there escaped only three, by the power of deed —  
Aeron's two war-hounds, and Kynon the strong —  
and I, in my blood, by the power of my song.

Men went to Catraeth, to war and great deeds,  
with shields, dark-blue armor, and mighty steeds;  
lances a-quiver, and keen darts to throw,  
armor a-gleam, and long swords all a-glow;  
there was one who excelled, gapped his way through the horde,  
five fifties he felled as he wielded his sword,  
Rhuvawn the Tall, who decked altars with gold,  
and gave largesse to minstrels of value untold. . . .

Men went to Catraeth, a jovial train,  
new mead their boon, and it now made their bane!  
three hundred, all harnessed, fought with a will,

and after the loud shout, all was still!  
 to shrines to do penance, though they might go,  
 the goal of their march was the door of death! . . .

After weariness long, it were dire to me  
 to meet death's pangs in affliction dread,  
 and equally dire was it thus to see  
 our men cast down and all of them dead!  
 and long I sigh and in misery weep  
 for the valiant masters of meadow and keep,  
 Rhuvawn and Gwgawn, noblest and best,  
 Gwiawn and Gwlyged, firm in each quest,  
 may their souls find place  
 through the Triune grace,  
 in the fullness of heaven, the abode of the blest!

Translated by T. Gwynn Jones

# FROM 'THE HOSTILE CONFEDERACY'

(Attributed to Taliessin)

I AM Taliessin,  
 I will delineate the true lineage  
 Continuing until the end,  
 In the pattern of Elphin. . . .

I know the noise of the blades,  
 Crimson on all sides, about the floor.  
 I know the regulator,  
 Between heaven and earth;  
 When an opposite hill is echoing,  
 When devastation urges onward,  
 When the silvery [vault] is shining,  
 When the dell shall be gloomy.  
 The breath when it is black,  
 When is best that has been.  
 A cow, when it is horned,  
 A wife, when she is lovely,  
 Milk, when it is white,  
 When the holly is green,  
 When is bearded the kid

In the multitude of fields,  
 When it is bearded,  
 When the cow-parsnip is created,  
 When is revolving the wheel,  
 When the mallet is flat,  
 When is spotted the little roebuck,  
 When the salt is brine,  
 Ale, when it is of an active quality,  
 When is of purplish hue the alder,  
 When is green the linnet,  
 When are red the hips,  
 Or a woman when restless,  
 When the night comes on.  
 What reserve there is in the hour of flowing,  
 No one knows whence the bosom of the sun is made ruddy.  
 A stain on a new garment,  
 It is difficult to remove it.  
 The string of a harp, why it complains,  
 The cuckoo, why it complains, why it sings. . . .

A river while it flows,  
 I know its extent;  
 I know when it disappears;  
 I know when it fills;  
 I know when it overflows;  
 I know when it shrinks;  
 I know what base  
 There is beneath the sea.  
 I know their equivalent,  
 Every one in its retinue;  
 How many were heard in a day,  
 How many days in a year,  
 How many shafts in a battle,  
 How many drops in a shower..  
 Mildly he divided them.  
 A greater mockery, the partial stirring up of disgrace,  
 The vicious muse of Gwydyon.  
 I know the one,  
 That filled the river,  
 On the people of Pharaoh.  
 Who brought the windings  
 Of present reasons.  
 What was the active patience,

When heaven was upreared.  
 What was a sail-staff  
 From earth to sky. . . .

A second time was I formed.  
 I have been a blue salmon.  
 I have been a dog; I have been a stag;  
 I have been a roebuck on the mountain.  
 I have been a stock, I have been a spade;  
 I have been an axe in the hand;  
 I have been a pin in a forceps,  
 A year and a half;  
 I have been a speckled white cock  
 Upon hens in Eiddyn.  
 I have been a stallion over a stud.  
 I have been a violent bull,  
 I have been a buck of yellow hue,  
 As it is feeding.  
 I have been a grain discovered,  
 Which grew on a hill.  
 He that reaped me placed me  
 Into a smoke-hole driving me.  
 Exerting of the hand,  
 In afflicting me,  
 A hen received me,  
 With ruddy claws, [and] parting comb.  
 I rested nine nights.  
 In her womb a child,  
 I have been matured,  
 I have been an offering before the Guledig,  
 I have been dead, I have been alive. . . .

I am Taliessin.  
 I will delineate the true lineage,  
 That will continue to the end,  
 In the pattern of Elphin.

Translated by William F. Skene

## FROM THE 'MABINOGION'

## THE TREACHERY OF BLODEUWEDD

**O**NE day Llew went forth to Caer Dathyl, to visit Math the son of Mathonwy. And on the day that he set out for Caer Dathyl, Blodeuwedd walked in the Court. And she heard the sound of a horn. And after the sound of the horn, behold a tired stag went by, with dogs and huntsmen following it. And after the dogs and the huntsmen there came a crowd of men on foot. "Send a youth," said she, "to ask who yonder host may be." So a youth went, and inquired who they were. "Gronw Pebyr is this, the lord of Penllyn," said they. And thus the youth told her.

Gronw Pebyr pursued the stag, and by the river Cynvael he overtook the stag and killed it. And what with flaying the stag and baiting his dogs, he was there until the night began to close in upon him. And as the day departed and the night drew near, he came to the gate of the Court. "Verily," said Blodeuwedd, "the Chieftain will speak ill of us if we let him at this hour depart to another land without inviting him in." "Yes, truly, lady," said they, "it will be most fitting to invite him."

Then went messengers to meet him and bid him in. And he accepted her bidding gladly, and came to the Court, and Blodeuwedd went to meet him, and greeted him, and bade him welcome. "Lady," said he, "Heaven repay thee thy kindness."

When they had disaccoutred themselves, they went to sit down. And Blodeuwedd looked upon him, and from the moment that she looked on him she became filled with his love. And he gazed on her, and the same thought came unto him as unto her, so that he could not conceal from her that he loved her, but he declared unto her that he did so. Thereupon she was very joyful. And all their discourse that night was concerning the affection and love which they felt one for the other, and which in no longer space than one evening had arisen. And that evening passed they in each other's company.

The next day he sought to depart. But she said, "I pray thee go not from me today." And that night he tarried also. And that night they consulted by what means they might always be together. "There is none other counsel," said he, "but that thou strive to learn from Llew Llaw Gyffes in what manner he will meet his death. And this must thou do under the semblance of solicitude concerning him."

The next day Gronw sought to depart. "Verily," said she, "I will counsel thee not to go from me today." "At thy instance will I not go," said he, "albeit, I must say; there is danger that the chief who owns the palace may return home." "Tomorrow," answered she, "will I indeed permit thee to go forth."

The next day he sought to go, and she hindered him not. "Be mindful," said Gronw, "of what I have said unto thee, and converse with him fully, and that under the guise of the dalliance of love, and find out by what means he may come to his death."

That night Llew Llaw Gyffes returned to his home. And the day they spent in discourse, and minstrelsy, and feasting. And at night they went to rest, and he spoke to Blodeuwedd once, and he spoke to her a second time. But, for all this, he could not get from her one word. "What aileth thee?" said he, "art thou well?" "I was thinking," said she, "of that which thou didst never think of concerning me; for I was sorrowful as to thy death, lest thou shouldst go sooner than I." "Heaven reward thy care for me," said he, "but until Heaven take me I shall not easily be slain." "For the sake of Heaven, and for mine, show me how thou mightest be slain. My memory in guarding is better than thine." "I will tell thee gladly," said he. "Not easily can I be slain, except by a wound. And the spear wherewith I am struck must be a year in the forming. And nothing must be done towards it except during the sacrifice on Sundays." "Is this certain?" asked she. "It is in truth," he answered. "And I cannot be slain within a house, nor without. I cannot be slain on horseback nor on foot." "Verily," said she, "in what manner then canst thou be slain?" "I will tell thee," said he. "By making a bath for me by the side of a river, and by putting a roof over the cauldron, and thatching it well and tightly, and bringing a buck, and putting it beside the cauldron. Then if I place one foot on the buck's back, and the other on the edge of the cauldron, whosoever strikes me thus will cause my death." "Well," said she, "I thank Heaven that it will be easy to avoid this."

No sooner had she held this discourse than she sent to Gronw Pebyr. Gronw toiled at making the spear, and that day twelvemonth it was ready. And that very day he caused her to be informed thereof.

"Lord," said Blodeuwedd unto Llew, "I have been thinking how it is possible that what thou didst tell me formerly can be true; wilt thou show me in what manner thou couldst stand at once upon the edge of a cauldron and upon a buck, if I prepare the bath for thee?" "I will show thee," said he.

Then she sent unto Gronw, and bade him be in ambush on the hill which is now called Bryn Kyvergyr, on the bank of the river Cynvael. She caused also to be collected all the goats that were in the Cantrev, and had them brought to the other side of the river, opposite Bryn Kyvergyr.

And the next day she spoke thus. "Lord," said she, "I have caused the roof and the bath to be prepared, and lo! they are ready." "Well," said Llew, "we will go gladly to look at them."

The day after they came and looked at the bath. "Wilt thou go into the bath, lord?" said she. "Willingly will I go in," he answered. So into the bath he went, and he anointed himself. "Lord," said she, "behold the animals which thou didst speak of as being called bucks." "Well," said he, "cause one of them to be caught and brought here." And the buck was brought. Then Llew

rose out of the bath, and put on his trousers, and he placed one foot on the edge of the bath and the other on the buck's back.

Thereupon Gronw rose up from the hill which is called Bryn Kyvergyr, and he rested on one knee, and flung the poisoned dart and struck him on the side, so that the shaft started out, but the head of the dart remained in. Then he flew up in the form of an eagle and gave a fearful scream. And henceforth was he no more seen.

#### KILHWCH AT ARTHUR'S COURT

And the youth pricked forth upon a steed with head dappled gray, of four winters old, firm of limb, with shell-formed hoofs, having a bridle of linked gold on his head, and upon him a saddle of costly gold. And in the youth's hand were two spears of silver, sharp, well-tempered, headed with steel, three ells in length, of an edge to wound the wind, and cause blood to flow, and swifter than the fall of the dewdrop from the blade of reed-grass upon the earth when the dew of June is at the heaviest. A gold-hilted sword was upon his thigh, the blade of which was of gold, bearing a cross of inlaid gold of the hue of the lightning of heaven: his war-horn was of ivory. Before him were two brindled white-breasted greyhounds, having strong collars of rubies about their necks, reaching from the shoulder to the ear. And the one that was on the left side bounded across to the right side, and the one on the right to the left, and like two sea-swallows sported around him. And his courser cast up four sods with his four hoofs, like four swallows in the air, about his head, now above, now below. About him was a four-cornered cloth of purple, and an apple of gold was at each corner, and every one of the apples was of the value of an hundred kine. And there was precious gold of the value of three hundred kine upon his shoes, and upon his stirrups, from his knee to the tip of his toe. And the blade of grass bent not beneath him, so light was his courser's tread as he journeyed towards the gate of Arthur's Palace.

Spoke the youth, "Is there a porter?" "There is; and if thou holdest not thy peace, small will be thy welcome. I am Arthur's porter every first day of January. And during every other part of the year but this, the office is filled by Huandaw, and Gogigwc, and Llaeskenym, and Pennpingyon, who goes upon his head to save his feet, neither towards the sky nor towards the earth, but like a rolling stone upon the floor of the court." "Open the portal." "I will not open it." "Wherefore not?" "The knife is in the meat, and the drink is in the horn, and there is revelry in Arthur's Hall, and none may enter therein but the son of a king of a privileged country, or a craftsman bringing his craft. But there will be refreshment for thy dogs, and for thy horses; and for thee there will be collops cooked and peppered, and luscious wine and mirthful songs, and food for fifty men shall be brought unto thee in the guest chamber, where the stranger and the sons of other countries eat, who come not

unto the precincts of the Palace of Arthur. Thou wilt fare no worse there than thou wouldst with Arthur in the Court. A lady shall smooth thy couch, and shall lull thee with songs; and early tomorrow morning, when the gate is open for the multitude that come hither today, for thee shall it be opened first, and thou mayest sit in the place that thou shalt choose in Arthur's Hall, from the upper end to the lower." Said the youth, 'That will I not do. If thou openest the gate, it is well. If thou dost not open it, I will bring disgrace upon thy lord, and evil report upon thee. And I will set up three shouts at this very gate, than which none were ever more deadly, from the top of Pengwaed in Cornwall to the bottom of Dinsol, in the North, and to Esgair Oervel, in Ireland. And all the women in this palace that are pregnant shall lose their offspring; and such as are not pregnant, their hearts shall be turned by illness, so that they shall never bear children from this day forward.' "What clamor soever thou mayest make," said Glewlwyd Gavaelvawr, "against the laws of Arthur's palace shalt thou not enter therein, until I first go and speak with Arthur."

Then Glewlwyd went into the Hall. And Arthur said to him, "Hast thou news from the gate?" — "Half of my life is past, and half of thine. I was heretofore in Kaer Se and Asse, in Sach and Salach, in Lotor and Fotor; and I have been heretofore in India the Great and India the Lesser; and I was in the battle of Dau Ynyr, when the twelve hostages were brought from Llychlyn. And I have also been in Europe, and in Africa, and in the islands of Corsica, and in Caer Brythwch, and Brythach, and Verthach; and I was present when formerly thou didst slay the family of Clis the son of Merin, and when thou didst slay Mil Du the son of Ducum, and when thou didst conquer Greece in the East. And I have been in Caer Oeth and Annoeth, and in Caer Nevenhyr; nine supreme sovereigns, handsome men, saw we there, but never did I behold a man of equal dignity with him who is now at the door of the portal." Then said Arthur, "If walking thou didst enter in here, return thou running. And everyone that beholds the light, and everyone that opens and shuts the eye, let them shew him respect, and serve him, some with gold-mounted drinking-horns, others with collops cooked and peppered, until food and drink can be prepared for him. It is unbecoming to keep such a man as thou sayest he is, in the wind and the rain." Said Kai, "By the hand of my friend, if thou wouldest follow my counsel, thou wouldest not break through the laws of the Court because of him." "Not so, blessed Kai. It is an honor to us to be resorted to, and the greater our courtesy the greater will be our renown, and our fame, and our glory."

And Glewlwyd came to the gate, and opened the gate before him; and although all dismounted upon the horse-block at the gate, yet did he not dismount, but rode in upon his charger. Then said Kilhwch, "Greeting be unto thee, Sovereign Ruler of this Island; and be this greeting no less unto the lowest than unto the highest, and be it equally unto thy guests, and thy war-

riors, and thy chieftains — let all partake of it as completely as thyself. And complete be thy favor, and thy fame, and thy glory, throughout all this Island.” “Greeting unto thee also,” said Arthur; “sit thou between two of my warriors, and thou shalt have minstrels before thee, and thou shalt enjoy the privileges of a king born to a throne, as long as thou remainest here. And when I dispense my presents to the visitors and strangers in this Court, they shall be in thy hand at my commencing.” Said the youth, “I came not here to consume meat and drink; but if I obtain the boon that I seek, I will requite it thee, and extol thee; and if I have it not, I will bear forth thy dispraise to the four quarters of the world, as far as thy renown has extended.” Then said Arthur, “Since thou wilt not remain here, chieftain, thou shalt receive the boon whatsoever thy tongue may name, as far as the wind dries, and the rain moistens, and the sun revolves, and the sea encircles, and the earth extends; save only my ship; and my mantle; and Caledvwlch, my sword; and Rhongomyant, my lance; and Wynebgwrthucher, my shield; and Carnwenhau, my dagger; and Gwenhwyvar, my wife. By the truth of Heaven, thou shalt have it cheerfully, name what thou wilt.” “I would that thou bless my hair.” “That shall be granted thee.”

And Arthur took a golden comb, and scissors, whereof the loops were of silver, and he combed his hair. And Arthur inquired of him who he was. “For my heart warms unto thee, and I know that thou art come of my blood. Tell me, therefore, who thou art.” “I will tell thee,” said the youth. “I am Kilhwch, the son of Kilydd, the son of Prince Kelyddon, by Goleuddydd, my mother, the daughter of Prince Anlawdd.” “That is true,” said Arthur; “thou art my cousin. Whatsoever boon thou mayest ask, thou shalt receive, be it what it may that thy tongue shall name.” “Pledge the truth of Heaven and the faith of thy kingdom thereof.” “I pledge it thee, gladly.” “I crave of thee then, that thou obtain for me Olwen, the daughter of Yspaddaden Penkawr.”

#### PEREDUR AT THE CASTLE OF WONDERS

At the break of day, Peredur arose, and took his horse and with his uncle's permission he rode forth. And he came to a vast desert wood, and at the further end of the wood was a meadow, and on the other side of the meadow he saw a large castle. And thitherward Peredur bent his way, and he found the gate open, and he proceeded to the hall. And he beheld a stately hoary-headed man sitting on one side of the hall, and many pages around him, who arose to receive and to honor Peredur. And they placed him by the side of the owner of the palace. Then they discoursed together; and when it was time to eat, they caused Peredur to sit beside the nobleman during the repast. And when they had eaten and drunk as much as they desired, the nobleman asked Peredur whether he could fight with a sword. “Were I to receive instruction,” said Peredur, “I think I could.” Now, there

was on the floor of the hall a huge staple, as large as a warrior could grasp. "Take yonder sword," said the man to Peredur, "and strike the iron staple." So Peredur arose and struck the staple, so that he cut it in two; and the sword broke into two parts also. "Place the two parts together, and reunite them," and Peredur placed them together, and they became entire as they were before. And a second time he struck upon the staple, so that both it and the sword broke in two, and as before they reunited. And the third time he gave a like blow, and placed the broken parts together, and neither staple nor the sword would unite as before. "Youth," said the nobleman, "come now, and sit down, and my blessing be upon thee. Thou fightest best with the sword of any man in the kingdom. Thou hast arrived at two thirds of thy strength, and the other third thou hast not yet obtained; and when thou attainest to thy full power, none will be able to contend with thee. I am thy uncle, thy mother's brother, and I am brother to the man in whose house thou wast last night." Then Peredur and his uncle discoursed together, and he beheld two youths enter the hall, and proceed up to the chamber, bearing a spear of mighty size, with three streams of blood flowing from the point to the ground. And when all the company saw this, they began wailing and lamenting. But for all that, the man did not break off his discourse with Peredur. And as he did not tell Peredur the meaning of what he saw, he forbore to ask him concerning it. And when the clamor had a little subsided, behold two maidens entered, with a large salver between them, in which was a man's head, surrounded by a profusion of blood. And thereupon the company of the court made so great an outcry, that it was irksome to be in the same hall with them. But at length they were silent. And when time was that they should sleep, Peredur was brought into a fair chamber.

And the next day, with his uncle's permission, he rode forth. . . .

Arthur was at Caerlleon upon Usk, his principal palace; and in the center of the floor of the hall were four men sitting on a carpet of velvet, Owain the son of Urien, and Gwalchmai the son of Gwyar, and Howel the son of Emyr Llydaw, and Peredur of the long lance. And thereupon they saw a black curly-headed maiden enter, riding upon a yellow mule, with jagged thongs in her hand to urge it on; and having a rough and hideous aspect. Blacker were her face and her two hands than the blackest iron covered with pitch; and her hue was not more frightful than her form. High cheeks had she, and a face lengthened downwards, and a short nose with distended nostrils. And one eye was of a piercing mottled gray, and the other was as black as jet, deep-sunk in her head. And her teeth were long and yellow, more yellow were they than the flower of the broom. And her stomach rose from the breast-bone, higher than her chin. And her back was in the shape of a crook, and her legs were large and bony. And her figure was very thin and spare, except her feet and her legs, which were of huge size. And she greeted Arthur and all his household except Peredur. And to Peredur she spoke

harsh and angry words. "Peredur, I greet thee not, seeing that thou dost not merit it. Blind was fate in giving thee fame and favor. When thou wast in the Court of the Lame King, and didst see there the youth bearing the streaming spear, from the points of which were drops of blood flowing in streams, even to the hand of the youth, and many other wonders likewise, thou didst not inquire their meaning nor their cause. Hadst thou done so, the king would have been restored to health, and his dominions to peace. Whereas from henceforth, he will have to endure battles and conflicts, and his knights will perish, and wives will be widowed, and maidens will be left portionless, and all this because of thee." . . . Then said Peredur, "By my faith, I will not rest tranquilly until I know the story and the meaning of the lance whereof the black maiden spoke." . . .

And Peredur went along the mountain, and on the other side of the mountain he beheld a castle in the valley, wherein was a river. And he went to the castle; and as he entered it, he saw a hall, and the door of the hall was open, and he went in. And there he saw a lame gray-headed man sitting on one side of the hall, with Gwalchmai beside him. And Peredur beheld his horse, which the black man had taken, in the same stall with that of Gwalchmai. And they were glad concerning Peredur. And he went and seated himself on the other side of the hoary-headed man. Then, behold a yellow-haired youth came, and bent upon the knee before Peredur, and besought his friendship. "Lord," said the youth, "it was I that came in the form of the black maiden to Arthur's Court, and when thou didst throw down the chessboard, and when thou didst slay the black man of Ysbidinongyl, and when thou didst slay the stag, and when thou didst go to fight the black man of the cromlech. And I came with the bloody head in the salver, and with the lance that streamed with blood from the point to the hand, all along the shaft; and the head was thy cousin's, and he was killed by the sorceresses of Gloucester, who also lamed thine uncle; and I am thy cousin. And there is a prediction that thou art to avenge these things." Then Peredur and Gwalchmai took counsel, and sent to Arthur and his household, to beseech them to come against the sorceresses. And they began to fight with them; and one of the sorceresses slew one of Arthur's men before Peredur's face, and Peredur bade her forbear. And the sorceress slew a man before Peredur's face a second time, and a second time he forbade her. And the third time the sorceress slew a man before the face of Peredur; and then Peredur drew his sword, and smote the sorceress on the helmet; and all her head-armor was split in two parts. And she set up a cry, and desired the other sorceresses to flee, and told them that this was Peredur, the man who had learnt Chivalry with them, and by whom they were destined to be slain. Then Arthur and his household fell upon the sorceresses, and slew the sorceresses of Gloucester every one. And thus is it related concerning the Castle of Wonders.

Translations of Lady Charlotte Guest

## POEMS BY DAFYDD AB GWILYM

## PANEGYRIC TO THE SUMMER

**T**HOU O summer, father of fertility,  
 Father of the luxuriant wood,  
 Fair forester, strong master of the cliff.  
 Of each precipice thou art the thatcher.  
 Thou hast caused the rebirth of the world.  
 There are, inspiration of my song,  
 Plants vigorous in growth,  
 To furnish homes for birdlings.  
 Well knows the wood thy generous hand,  
 In the name of God, who is loved.

"O thou who art dear to the four quarters of the globe,  
 Wonderful is the growth beneath thy blessing;  
 Harvests on the fair earth  
 And flocks of birds that fly;  
 Grasses shining in the meadows,  
 Wild bees swarming.  
 A foster-father art thou, prophet of the high roads,  
 Lord of the earthen temple and its green gardens.

"Evil is the approach of August; bitter is it night and day  
 To know the ending of the long, golden season,  
 When thou wilt go away.  
 Tell me, O Summer, the knowledge I ask of thee;  
 In what direction, to what land goest thou,  
 In the name of wise Peter?"

"Cease thy complaint, O praiseworthy bard,  
 Be silent; thou wouldst be master of a mighty enchanter;  
 My force is Destiny.  
 A prince am I, in sunshine  
 Coming for three months of growth,  
 And a multitude of labors.  
 When ends the leafage, the weaving of the branches,  
 I go, to avoid the wind of winter,  
 To the deep infernal regions."

"Go with thee the hundred blessings  
 Of the bards of the world!  
 A health to the king of fine weather!  
 A health to our ruler and lord!  
 A health to the young cuckoos,  
 A health to weather and grasses,  
 A health to the sun on high!  
 That great white ball in the sky above the mountain,  
 Shall not be lord of an army,  
 Until comes a second time  
 Summer with its lovely hillsides! "

## THE SNOW

**I** SLEEP not, yet go not from the house;  
 I chafe at the restraint;  
 There is no place in the world today,  
 On either ford or hill.  
 Even a maiden's word cannot entice me  
 To leave my house for the fine snow.

A plague on the work! the snow will fall  
 Like plumage on my robe,  
 And my abode looks like the quarry of a dragon,  
 Who chips fine white dust from the cliffs.  
 My excuse is, that in the month of January,  
 My garment looks like a miller's.  
 God makes men hermits at this season.  
 The black earth he covers with this white enamel.

The forest has a white garment; the grove, a sheet;  
 A fine flour is fluff on every branch,  
 Blossoms from Heaven like April flowers.  
 A ponderous covering of cold care on the fresh woods,

A magical wheaten flour, an armor  
 For the level stretches of earth,  
 A cake of tallow on its skin,  
 A thick shower of foam,  
 Fleece thicker than a man's fist.

Through Wales they have stung, the white bees of Heaven;  
 Why does God send so great a plague,  
 Whence come these many feathers from the geese of the saints?  
 Where the narrow paths?  
 Alas! it is the month of January.  
 What army of angels white is spitting on the ground?  
 Of course, it is no worse than this.  
 Who in Heaven are carpenters, whose shavings  
 We see dropping down from the loft?

A silver garment of ice — coldest in the world —  
 A cement is on hill and hollow and ditch,  
 A strong coat of steel, a burden on the earth,  
 A pavement wider than the grave-flags of the ocean.  
 A great, steep, pale wall is my land,  
 From sea to sea.

#### THE JEALOUS HUSBAND

DAILY I am in pain,  
 I love one who believes me not.  
 I have bestowed an abiding fondness on a woman  
 As fair as Iseult, and the treasure of a jealous husband.  
 For a poor man, such fortune is not easy;  
 It is a tedious care seeking to gain the tall, fair one.  
 I have not won the maiden slender,  
 There is a guard against my winning her.  
 If she, the fairest of women, seeks company,  
 Always a knave comes to watch her.  
 Does not the jealous man like pleasure?  
 Nay, he is bitter, he is over with play.  
 He loves neither nightingale, nor cuckoo,  
 Nor linnet in the dusky grove,  
 Nor the singing of songs, nor nutting-parties;  
 To hear small birds warble in May  
 Amid juicy foliage pains him;  
 The talk of a thrush in the lower green branches  
 Or the song of a proud nightingale is odious to him;  
 Disgusting to him — decrepit man —  
 Is the baying of hounds or the plucking of the harp.  
 The jealous man is a black Irishman,  
 I know him and I hate him!

May the beauty with the white brow be separated  
From this partner before the end of six months!  
I have loved her a long time,  
Though she is the wife of another.  
Would that I might see a heap of earth and sticks  
And stones upon the husband of the fair wife,  
A load of clods heavy enough for eight oxen  
Upon the churl!  
From my inheritance I would give  
For this fellow his length of earth.  
Would that she might be my Iseult,  
And the husband under the cross  
In his hollow grave beneath an elder tree.  
My God, if I had my choice,  
I shouldn't let him live a month longer;  
She would not mind his burial,  
Neither should I.

Translations of E. C. Knowlton

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## OTHER CELTIC LITERATURES

**A**MONG the Celtic peoples only the Irish and the Welsh have bequeathed to posterity an abundant literature. Yet we know that the Gauls cultivated at least poetry with great devotion, and it is not without significance that the word "bard" is itself of Gaulish origin. Chanting to the harp, the bards eulogized their chiefs, satirized their foes, sang of the mighty men of the past, and composed songs of war and of victory, of prophecy and of incantation, while Cæsar states that the Druids of Britain set forth their lore in many verses which might not be reduced to writing, so that their pupils were obliged to commit them to memory, a task which sometimes consumed twenty years.

Although the Gaulish language was spoken until at least the fifth century, all trace of its literature has vanished, unless some fragments as yet unrecognized may have lurked in sources upon which the Roman historians drew for their accounts of the Celtic invasions of Italy. Even the language is known only through some sixty inscriptions — short for the most part — a few words and sentences preserved by Greek and Latin writers, proper names in Latin inscriptions in the Celtic area and on a few coins, many names of places, especially in France, and terms carried over into the modern Romance languages (whence come such English words as *change*, *quai*, *soap*, *league*, and *tench*).

Of the language of the Gauls who conquered Galatia in Asia Minor about 235 B.C. a few words have been preserved, though Saint Jerome (341-420), in his introduction to his commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, says that Celtic was still spoken there in his day.

The Celtic literature of Scotland, which was civilized from Ireland, finds its earliest traces in six entries on the transfer of land contained in the 'Book of Deer,' written in the eleventh or twelfth century; but its most important document is the 'Book of the Dean of Lismore,' compiled between 1512 and 1542, and containing many Scottish poems on various themes, as well as a number of Ossianic ballads. It is, indeed, only in the ballad and other forms of the short poem that Scots Gaelic is rich; prose of high literary worth and poems of length have proved alien to its genius. Toward the end of the seventeenth century Duncan Macrae of Inverinate compiled the 'Book of Fermaig,' which contains poems on religious and political themes; and among the host of individual poets mention may be made of Mary Macleod (died 1674), John Macdonald (died 1709), Alexander Macdonald and Duncan Macintyre, both in the eighteenth century, and Neil Macleod, Mary Macpherson, and John Macphadyan, all in the nineteenth.

In the Isle of Man, linguistically cognate with the "Goidelic" Irish and Scottish Gaels, the only indigenous literature is the *carvels* [carols] sung on Christmas Eve and dealing chiefly with the Nativity and Passion, or with attempts to portray the pains of hell and the joys of heaven. About eighty of these have been published; and there are also a number of ballads—on the history of the island, on the execution of "Brown William" in 1662, and on a miser named Molley Charane—besides an Ossianic poem of the mid-eighteenth century, based on Gaelic sources. The language is rapidly becoming extinct, and literary productivity has wholly ceased.

Turning to the "Brythonic" division of Celtic, of which the most distinguished representative is Welsh, we are here concerned with Cornish and Breton. Cornish was the old language of the Duchy of Cornwall, and in 1542 Andrew Borde wrote, in his 'Boke of the Introduction to Knowledge': "In Cornwall is two speches, the one is naughty [dialectic (?)] Englysshe, and the other is Cornysse speche. And there be many men and women the which cannot speake one worde of Englysshe, but all Cornysse." By the middle of the seventeenth century the language was fast decaying, and in the first half of the nineteenth it finally disappeared.

The earliest documents of Cornish are records of the manumission of serfs in a tenth-century manuscript from the Priory of Saint Petrock at Bodmin, and a Cornish-Latin vocabulary of the latter half of the twelfth century. The oldest records of any literary value are forty-one lines of verse of the early fifteenth century which laud the virtues of a certain lady and counsel her how to rule her husband-to-be. More important is 'The Poem of Mount Calvary' or 'The Passion,' dating from the same period, drawn from the four Gospels and the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, and consisting of 259 stanzas of eight seven-syllabled lines each. The chief literary activity, however, was in the drama. Here belong, first, the three 'Ordinalia,' dating from the fifteenth century and treating successively of 'The Origin of the World,' 'The Passion,' and 'The Resurrection,' following both Biblical and legendary sources. Other dramas concerned 'The Life of Saint Meriasek,' written in 1504 by "Dominus Hadton" (?), perhaps for presentation at Camborne, of which he was the patron saint, and interwoven with the legend of Saint Sylvester and the Emperor Constantine; and 'The Creation of the World, with Noah's Flood,' composed by William Jordan of Helston in 1611, and based on the first of the 'Ordinalia.' This 'Creation' contains several passages in English, to be spoken only by Lucifer and his servants, "as if," Henry Jenner neatly puts it, "the author meant to imply that English was the natural language of such beings, and that they only spoke Cornish when on their good behavior, relapsing into their own tongue whenever they became more than ordinarily excited or vicious." Mention may also be made of a popular tale of some length concerning the adventures of John of Chy-an-Hur [Ram's House], written about 1667, and of several poems, e. g. an elegy

on William of Orange (1702) by Edward Lhuyd, besides epigrams, epitaphs, and other more occasional verse.

In the fifth and sixth centuries of our era, large numbers of Celts fled from southern Britain to escape the Saxon invaders, and crossing the Channel, they found new homes in an area once Celtic-speaking, but long since latinized — Brittany, the ancient Armorica. The first documents in Breton, aside from proper names, glosses, and a few coins and inscriptions, are some phrases in the French farce of 'Maistre Pathelin' (between 1460 and 1470), and the 'Catholicon' (a dictionary) of Jehan Lagadeuc (1464). Yet there is evidence that there was a Breton literature long before that time, for Marie de France, writing in the twelfth century, expressly states that "the Bretons had made lays" of the themes she herself chose, notably her 'Guigemar' and 'Equitan.' As in Cornwall, the drama was popular in Brittany, as is shown by 'The Life of Saint Nonn' (fifteenth century), which is based on the Latin life of this saint; 'The Great Mystery of Jesus' (the conventional title for the long and descriptive designation in the original), drawn from French sources and first published in 1530 in a volume containing also the three poems 'Tremenvan an Ytron Guerches Maria' [Passing of the Lady Virgin Mary], 'Penzec Leuenez Maria' [Fifteen Joys of Mary], and 'Buhez Mabden' [The Life of Man], the first drawn mainly from the Latin 'Transitus Beatae Mariæ Virginis,' the latter two of unknown origin; and 'The Mystery of Saint Barbe' (sixteenth century) from a French source. Mystery plays were long popular in Brittany, as is shown by those on Robert the Devil (1741), the creation of the world (1760), and Saint Alexis (1799), taken from French originals. Poetic compositions, both translated and original, were also numerous, such as 'The Mirror of Death' (1519) in 3600 verses, and a vast amount of material — mysteries, lives of the saints, etc. — still exists only in manuscript form, while ballads and other short poems have been produced in abundance to the present day.

As regards the artistic value of these productions in Manx, Cornish, and Breton, it must be confessed that they are inferior to those composed in the older periods of Irish and Welsh. The two latter literatures arose in days of national and linguistic independence; the three former had to contend from the beginning, so far as written evidence goes, with the developed forms in Irish and English (for Manx), English (for Cornish), and French (for Breton). Just as Scots Gaelic was overshadowed by Irish Gaelic on the one hand and by English on the other, and just as Modern Irish can scarcely hope to contend with English, so the Manx, Cornish, and Breton literatures were, in reality, doomed from their births to meet the fate which had, centuries before, come upon Gaulish when it faced the civilization and the literature of Rome. The marvel is that they achieved so much; but it is the student of Celtic linguistics, rather than the lover of literature, who will turn their pages with pleasure and with profit.

LOUIS H. GRAY

# OLD NORSE LITERATURE

## THE EDDAS

THE fanciful but still commonly believed meaning of the word "Edda," which even many of the dictionaries explain as "great-grandmother," does not, after all, inaptly describe by suggestion the general character of the work to which it is given. The picture of an ancient dame at the fire-side, telling tales and legendary lore of times whose memory has all but disappeared, is a by no means inappropriate personification, even, if it has no other foundation. In point of fact, "Edda" as the title of a literary work has nothing whatsoever to do with a great-grandmother. Nor is it at all certain that it means "the art of poetry," or "poetics." It may be no more than a place-name, the name of the town with which the composition was associated.

There are in reality two 'Eddas,' which are in a certain sense connected in subject-material, but yet in more ways than one are wholly distinct. As originally applied, the name now used collectively unquestionably belonged to the one variously called, to distinguish it from the other, the 'Younger Edda,' on account of the relative age of its origin; the 'Prose Edda,' since in its greater part it is written in prose; and the 'Snorra Edda,' the Edda of Snorri, from the author of the work in its original form. In contradistinction to this, the other is called the 'Elder Edda,' the 'Poetical Edda,' and from the name of its once assumed author, the 'Sæmundar Edda,' the Edda of Sæmund.

Legitimately and by priority of usage, the name "Edda" belongs to the first-named work alone. In the form in which it has ultimately come down to us, this is the compilation of many hands at widely different times; but in its most important and fundamental parts it was undoubtedly either written by the Iclander Snorri himself, or under his immediate supervision.

Snorri Sturluson, its author, both from the part he played in national politics in his day and from his literary legacy to the present, is altogether the most remarkable man in the history of Iceland. He was born in 1179, his father, Sturla Thordarson, being one of the most powerful chieftains of the island. As was the custom of the time, he was sent from home to be fostered, remaining away until his foster-father's death, or until he was nineteen years old; his own father in the meantime having died as well. He entered upon active life with but little more than his own ambition to further him; but through his brother's influence he made the following year a brilliant marriage, and thus laid the foundation of his power, which thereafter steadily

grew. In 1215 Snorri was elected "Speaker of the Law" for the Commonwealth. At the expiration of his term of service in the summer of 1218 he went to Norway, where he was received with extraordinary hospitality both by King Hakon, who made him his liegeman, and by the king's father-in-law, Earl Skuli. On the authority of some of the sagas, he is said to have promised the latter at this time to use his influence to bring Iceland under the dominion of Norway. Two years later he returned to Iceland, taking back with him as a present from the king a ship and many other valuable gifts. In 1222 he was again made "Speaker of the Law," which post he now held continuously for nine years.

Iceland, as the Commonwealth neared its end, was torn apart by the jealous feuds of the chieftains. A long series of complications had aroused a bitter hostility to Snorri among his own relatives. In 1229, he found it necessary to ride to the Althing at the head of eight hundred men. The matter did not then come to an open rupture, but in 1239 it finally resulted in a regular battle, in which Snorri's faction was worsted. To avoid consequences he immediately after fled to Norway. Unwisely, he here gave his adherence to Earl Skuli, now at odds with the king, and thereby incurred the active displeasure of the latter; who, evidently fearing the use of Snorri's power against him, forbade him by letter to return to Iceland. The command was disregarded, however, and he presently was back again in his native land. In 1240 Skuli was slain, and shortly afterward King Hakon seems to have resolved upon Snorri's death. Using Arni, a son-in-law of the Icelander, as a willing messenger, he sent a letter to Gissur, another son-in-law, between whom and his father-in-law an active feud was on foot, demanding that he send the latter a prisoner to Norway, or if that were impossible, to kill him. Gissur accordingly, with seventy men at his back, came to Snorri's farmstead Reykjaholt on the night of the 22d of September, 1241, when the old chieftain was mercilessly slain in the cellar, where he had taken refuge, by an unknown member of the band.

In spite of his political life, Snorri found opportunity for abundant literary work. The 'Icelandic Annals' say that he "compiled the 'Edda' and many other books of historical learning, and Icelandic sagas." Of these, however, only two have come down to us: his 'Edda' and the sagas of the Norse kings, known since the seventeenth century as the 'Heimskringla,' the best piece of independent prose literature, and in its bearing the most important series of sagas, of all the number that are left to attest the phenomenal literary activity of the Icelanders.

Snorri's 'Edda' — both as he, the foremost poet of his day, originally conceived it, and with its subsequent additions — is a handbook for poets, an *Ars poetica*, as its name itself signifies. That it served its purpose as a recognized authority is discoverable from the references to it in later Icelandic poets, where "rules of Edda," "laws of Edda," "Eddic art," and "Edda"

are of frequent occurrence, as indicating an ideal of poetical expression striven for by some and deprecated by others. As Snorri wrote it, the 'Edda' was an admirably arranged work in three parts: the 'Gylfaginning,' a compendium of the old mythology, the knowledge of which in Snorri's day was fast dying out; the 'Skáldskaparmál,' a dictionary of poetical expressions, many of which, contained in ancient poems, were no longer intelligible; and the 'Háttatal,' a poem or rather series of poems, exemplifying in its own construction the use and kinds of meter. As it has come down to us, it has been greatly added to and altered. A long preface filled with the learning of the Middle Ages now introduces the whole; the introductions and conclusions of the parts of the work have been extended; several old poems have been included; a Skáldatal, or list of skalds, has been added, as have also several grammatical and rhetorical tracts — some of which are of real historical value.

With regard to matter and manner, the parts of Snorri's 'Edda' are as follows: — The 'Gylfaginning' [Delusion of Gylfi] is a series of tales told in answer to the questions of Gylfi, a legendary Swedish king, who comes in disguise to the gods in Asgard to learn the secret of their power. By way of illustration it quotes, among other poetical citations, verses from several of the lays of the 'Elder Edda.' The 'Skáldskaparmál' [Poetical Diction] is also in great part in the form of questions and answers. It contains under separate heads the periphrases, appellatives, and synonyms used in ancient verse, which are often explained by long tales; and like the preceding part, it also is illustrated by numerous poetical quotations here, particularly from the skalds. The 'Háttatal' [Meters], finally, consists of three poems: the first an encomium on the Norwegian King Hakon, and the others on Earl Skuli. It exemplifies in not fewer than one hundred and two strophes the use of as many kinds of meter, many of them being accompanied by a prose commentary of greater or less length.

That Snorri really wrote the work as here described seems to be undoubted, although there is no trace of it as a whole until after his death. At what period of his career it arose, can however merely be conjectured. We only know with certainty the date of the 'Háttatal'; that may not unlikely have been the nucleus of the whole, which falls undoubtedly between 1221 and 1223, shortly after the return from the first visit to Norway. The oldest manuscript of the 'Snorra Edda,' now in the University Library at Upsala, Sweden, which was written before 1300, assigns the work to him by name; and the 'Icelandic Annals,' as has already been stated, under the year of his death corroborates the statement of his authorship of "the Edda" — that is, of course, of this particular 'Edda,' for there can be no thought of the other.

Snorri's poetical work outside of the 'Edda' is represented only by fugitive verses. An encomium that he wrote on the wife of Earl Hakon has been lost. As a poet, Snorri undoubtedly stands upon a lower plane than that which he occupies as a historian. He wrote at a time when poetry was in its decline in

Iceland; and neither in the 'Háttatal' nor in his other verse, except in form and phraseology, of which he had a wonderful control, does he rise to the level of a host of earlier skalds. It is his critical knowledge of the old poetry of Norway and Iceland that makes his 'Edda' of such unique value, and particularly as no small part of the material accessible to him has since been irrevocably lost. Snorri's 'Edda,' in its very conception, is a wonderful book to have arisen at the time in which it was written, and in no other part of the Germanic North in the thirteenth century had such a thing been possible. It is not only, however, as a commentary on old Norse poetry that it is remarkable. Its importance as a compendium of the ancient Northern mythology is as great — one whose loss nothing could supplant. As a whole, it is of incalculable value to the entire Germanic race for the light that it sheds upon its early intellectual life, its ethics, and its religion.

The history of the 'Elder Edda' does not go back of the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1643 the Icelandic bishop Brynjolf Sveinsson sent as a present to Frederick III of Denmark several old Icelandic vellums, among which was the manuscript, dating, according to the most general assignment, from not earlier than 1350; since called the 'Codex Regius' of the 'Edda.' Not a word is known about its previous history. As to when it came into the hands of the bishop, or where it was discovered, he has given us no clue whatsoever. He had nevertheless not only a name ready for it, but a distinct theory of its authorship, for he wrote on the back of a copy that he had made, "Edda Sæmundi Multiscii" [Edda of Sæmund the Wise].

Both Bishop Brynjolf's title for the work and his assumption as to the name of its author — for both are apparently his — are open to criticism. The name 'Edda' belongs, as we have seen, to Snorri's book; to which it was given, if not by himself, certainly by one of his immediate followers. It is not difficult, however, to explain its new application. Snorri's 'Edda' cites, as has been mentioned, a number of single strophes of ancient poems, many of which were now found to be contained in Brynjolf's collection in a more or less complete form. This latter was, accordingly, not unnaturally looked upon as the source of the material of Snorri's work; and since its subject-matter too was the old poetry, it was consequently an earlier 'Edda.' Subsequently the title was extended to include a number of poems in the same manner found elsewhere; and 'Edda' has since been irretrievably the title both of the old Norse lays and of the old Norse *Ars poetica*, to which it more appropriately belongs.

The attribution of the work to Sæmund was even less justifiable. Sæmund Sigfusson was an Icelandic priest, who lived from 1056 to 1133. As a young man he studied in Germany, France, and Italy, but came back to Iceland about 1076. Afterward he settled down as priest and chieftain, as was his father before him, on the paternal estate Oddi in the south of Iceland, where he lived until his death. Among his contemporaries and subsequently he was

celebrated for his great learning, the memory of which has even come down to the present day in popular legend, where like learned men elsewhere he is made an adept in the black art, and many widely spread tales of supernatural power have clustered locally about his name. Sæmund is the first writer among the Icelanders of whom we have any information; and besides poems, he is reputed to have written some of the best of the sagas and other historical works. It is not unlikely that he did write parts of the history of Iceland and Norway in Latin, but nothing has come down to us that is with certainty to be attributed to him. There is, however, no ancient reference whatsoever to Sæmund as a poet, and it is but a legend that connects him in any way with the Eddic lays. Internal criticism readily yields the fact that they are not only of widely different dates of origin, but are so unlike in manner and in matter that it is idle to suppose a single authorship at all. Nor is it possible that Sæmund, as Bishop Brynjolf may have supposed was the case, even collected the lays contained in this 'Edda.' It is on the contrary to be assumed that the collection, of which Brynjolf's manuscript is but a copy, arose during the latter half of the twelfth century, in the golden age of Icelandic literature; a time when attention was most actively directed to the past, when many of the sagas current hitherto only as oral tradition were given a permanent form, and historical works of all sorts were written and compiled.

The fact of the matter is, that here is a collection of old Norse poems, the memory of whose real time and place of origin has disappeared, and whose authorship is unknown. Earlier commentators supposed them to be of extreme age, and carried them back to the very childhood of the race. Modern criticism has dispelled the illusions of any such antiquity. It has been proved, furthermore, that the oldest of the poems does not go back of the year 850, and that the youngest may have been written as late as 1200. As to their place of origin, although all have come to us from Iceland, by far the greater number of them apparently originated in Norway; several arose in the Norse colonies in Greenland; and although the whole collection was made in Iceland, where alone many of them had been remembered, but two are undoubtedly of distinct Icelandic parentage. With regard to their authorship, results are less direct. Folk-songs they are not in the proper sense of the word, in that in their present shape they are the work of individual poets, who made over in versified form material already existing in oral tradition. Only a small part of the ancient poetry that arose in this way has been preserved. From prose interpolations which supply breaks in the continuity of the lays in the 'Elder Edda' itself, as well as from isolated strophes of old poems, else unknown, quoted in Snorri's 'Edda,' and from the citation and use of such poetical material in sagas and histories, we know for a certainty that many other lays in the ancient manner once existed that have now been for all time lost.

Brynjolf's manuscript contains, whole or in part, as they are now considered to exist, thirty-two poems. From other sources six poems have since been added, presumably as ancient as the lays of the 'Codex Regius,' so that the 'Elder Edda' is made up of thirty-eight poems, not all of which, however, are even reasonably complete. In form they are in alliterative verse, but three different meters being represented, all the simplest and least artificial of the many kinds used by the Norsemen. In content the lays fall under three heads: they are mythic, in that they contain the myths of the old heathen religion of the Norsemen; ethic, in that they embody their views of life and rules of living; or they are heroic, in that they recount the deeds of legendary heroes of the race.

The mythic poems of the 'Edda,' taken together, give us a tolerably complete picture of the Northern mythology in the Viking Age; although some of them were not written until after the introduction of Christianity, and are therefore open to the imputation of having been to a greater or less extent affected by its teachings. The oldest poems of the collection are mythical in character. In some of them a particular god is the principal figure. Several of them, like the 'Vafthrúdnismál,' the 'Grímnismál,' 'Baldrs Draumar,' and the 'Hárbardsljód,' in this way are particularly devoted to Odin, whose supremacy they show over all other beings, and whose part they describe in the government of the universe; in others, like the 'Hymiskvida,' the 'Thrymskvida,' and the 'Alvismál,' Thor occupies the prominent part in his strife with the giants; single ones have other gods as their principal actors, like Skirnir, the messenger of Frey, in the 'Skírnismál,' Loki, the god of destruction, in the 'Lokasenna,' or Heimdall, the guardian of the rainbow bridge which stretched from heaven to earth, in the 'Rígsthúla.' A few of them are both mythic and heroic at the same time, like the 'Lay of Völund,' which tells of the fearful revenge of the mythical smith upon the Swedish king; or the 'Song of Grotti,' the magical mill, which ground what was wished, first peace and gold for its owner, King Frodi of Denmark, but later so much salt on the ship of Mysing, who had conquered the king and taken it away, that all together sank into the sea, which henceforth was salt. By far the greatest of the mythic lays is the long but fragmentary poem 'Völuspá,' the 'Prophecy of the Sibyl,' which is entitled to stand not only at the head of the Eddic songs but of all old Germanic poetry, for the beauty and dignity of its style, its admirable choice of language, and the whole inherent worth of its material. Its purpose is to give a complete picture, although only in its most essential features, of the whole heathen religion. It contains in this way the entire history of the universe: the creation of the world out of chaos; the origin of the giants and the dwarfs, of gods, of men; and ends with their destruction and ultimate renewal. The Sibyl is represented at the beginning in an assemblage of the whole human race, whom she bids be silent in order that she may be heard. Many of the

strophes, even in translation, retain much of their inherent dignity and poetic picturesqueness: —

There was in times of old  
where Ymir dwelt,  
nor land nor sea,  
nor gelid waves;  
earth existed not,  
nor heaven above;  
there was a chaotic chasm,  
and verdure nowhere.

Before Bur's sons  
raised up heaven's vault,  
they who the noble  
mid-earth shaped,  
the sun shone from the south  
on the structure's rocks;  
then was the earth begrown  
with green herbage.

The sun from the south,  
the moon's companion,  
her right hand cast  
round the heavenly horses:  
the sun knew not  
where she had a dwelling:  
the moon knew not  
what power he possessed;  
the stars knew not  
where they had station.

The gods thereupon gave the heavenly bodies names, and ordained the times and seasons. This was the golden age of the young world, before guilt and sin had come into it; a time of joy and beneficent activity. A deed of violence proclaimed its approaching end, and out of the slain giants' blood and bones the dwarfs were created. The gods then made the first man and woman, for whom the Norns established laws and allotted life and destiny. The use of gold was introduced, and with it its attendant evils; the Valkyries come, and the first warfare occurs in the world; the gods' stronghold is broken, and Odin hurls his spear among the people. In rapid succession follow the pictures of the awful ills that happen to gods and men, which finally end in Ragnarök, the twilight of the gods, and the conflagration of the universe. This, however,

is not the end. The Sibyl describes the reappearance of the green earth from the ocean. The gods again come back, and a new golden age begins of peace and happiness which shall endure forever.

Scarcely inferior to the 'Völuspá' for the importance of its material is the ethical poem or rather collection of poems called the 'Hávamál,' the 'Speech of the High One,' that is, of Odin the supreme god. The poem consists of sententious precepts and epigrammatic sayings, which ultimately have been set together to form a connected, though scarcely systematic, philosophy of life. The whole is naturally attributed to Odin, the source of all wisdom, the father and giver of all things. A part of the poem is the oldest of all the Eddic lays, and the whole of it was at hand early in the tenth century. Although many of its maxims show a primitive state of society, as a whole they are the experience of a people more advanced in culture than we are apt to fancy the Norsemen of the Viking Age, who could nevertheless philosophize at home as sturdily as they fought abroad. The morality of the 'Hávamál' is not always our morality, but many of its maxims are eternally true. Its keynote, again and again repeated, is the perishability of all earthly possessions, and the endurance alone of fairly won fame: —

Cattle die,  
kindred die,  
we ourselves also die;  
but the fair fame  
never dies  
of him who has earned it.

The heroic poems of the 'Elder Edda' recount as if belonging to a single legendary cycle what originally belonged to two; the one of Northern origin, the other the common property of the whole Germanic race. They are the Helgi poems on the one hand, and the Völsung poems on the other. Together they tell the "Story of the North," and come nearest to forming its greatest epic; it is the same story which Wagner has set to music as immortal in his 'Ring of the Nibelung' — although the principal source of his material is the prose 'Völsungasaga' and not the 'Edda' — and which in a form much later than the Icelandic versions is also told in the German 'Nibelungenlied.'

The Helgi poems are only loosely connected with the story of Sigurd the Völsung, and originally, but without doubt long before they were committed to writing, had no connection with it at all. As they now stand at the head of the heroic lays they are made to tell the deeds of early members of the Völsung race; namely, of Helgi Hjörvard's son, and Helgi Hundingsbane, who is said to have been named after him. The latter the 'Edda' makes the son of Sigmund the Völsung, and consequently an elder brother of Sigurd, the hero of the subsequent cycle of poems. To these last they are joined by a prose piece

ending with a description of Sigurd's parentage and birth, and his own personality, which the poems themselves do not give at length.

The remaining poems, fifteen in all, tell the old Germanic story of Sigurd, the Siegfried of the 'Nibelungenlied,' in the most ancient form in which it has come down to us. As contained in the 'Edda' it is a picture of great deeds, painted in powerful strokes which gain in force by the absence of carefully elaborated detail. In various ways it is unfortunate that the lays composing the cycle are not more closely consecutive; a difficulty that was felt by the earliest editors of the manuscript, who endeavored to bring the poems and fragments of poems then extant into some sort of connection, by the interpolation of prose passages of various lengths wherever it was considered necessary to the intelligibility of the story. As it is, however, there is even yet, and cannot help but be, on account of the differences in age, authorship, and place of origin of the lays, an inherent lack of correlation. Many of the poems overlap, and parts of the action are told several times and in varying form.

The Sigurd poems belong to a time prior to the introduction of Christianity, as is incontestably proved by the genuine heathen spirit that throughout pervades them. Their action is in the early days, when the gods walked upon earth and mixed themselves in human affairs. The real theme of the epic which the lays form is the mythical golden hoard, and with it the fated ring of the Nibelungs, owned originally by the dwarf Andvari, from whom it is wrung by the gods in their extremity. Andvari curses it to its possessors, and it is cursed again by the gods who are forced to deliver it up to Hreidmar as blood-money for his son, whom Loki had slain. Fafnir and Regin, the brothers of the slain Ottur, demand of their father their share of the blood-fine, and when this is refused, Hreidmar is killed while asleep, and Regin is driven away by Fafnir, who then in the guise of a dragon lies upon the golden hoard to guard it. Egged on by Regin, Sigurd slays Fafnir, and Regin also when he learns that he intends treachery.

Sigurd gives the ring of Andvari, taken from the hoard, to the Valkyrie Brynhild, as a pledge of betrothal; and when in the likeness of Gunnar the Nibelung — having by wiles forgotten his former vows — he rides to her through the fire, the ring is given back to him by Brynhild, who does not recognize him. The fatal ring is now given by Sigurd to his wife, Gudrun the Nibelung, who in a moment of anger shows it to Brynhild and taunts her with a recital of his history. Brynhild cannot bear to see the happiness of Gudrun, and does not rest until Sigurd is slain; and in slaying him, Guthorm, the youngest of the Nibelungs, is killed, struck down by the sword of the dying Sigurd. Brynhild, who will not outlive Sigurd, perishes on her own sword. Gudrun is subsequently, against her will, wedded to Atli the Hun. Gunnar and Högni, her brothers, the two remaining Nibelungs, are invited to visit Atli, when they are straightway fallen upon, their followers are killed, and they are bound.

They are asked to give up the golden hoard, whose hiding-place was known to them alone; but Gunnar first demands the death of his brother Högni, and then triumphantly tells Atli that the treasure is forever hidden in the Rhine — where, he only knows. He is cast into a serpent pit, and dies. Atli's sons and Gudrun's are slain by their mother, changed by the madness of grief at the slaughter of her brothers into an avenging Fury, and Atli himself and his men are burned in the hall. Carried then by the sea, into which she has hurled herself, Gudrun comes to the land of King Jonakr, who makes her his wife. Swanhild, the daughter of Sigurd and Gudrun, had been married to King Jörmunrek, but coming under unjust suspicion, is trodden to death by horses; and Gudrun dies of a broken heart, with a prayer to Sigurd upon her lips. Last of all, the sons of Gudrun and Jonakr, who, incited by their mother, had been sent out to avenge their sister, are stoned to death; and the curse ceases to work only when there is nothing more left for it to wreak itself upon.

It is a story of great deeds, whose motives are the bitter passions of that early time before the culture of Christianity had softened the hearts of men. The psychological truthfulness of its characters, however, in spite of their distance from today, is none the less unmistakable; and we watch the action with bated breath, as they are hurried on by a fate as relentless and inevitable as any that ever pursued an *Œdipus*. They are not the indistinct and shadowy forms which in many early literatures seem to grope out towards us from the mists of the past, whose clinging heaviness the present is unable wholly to dispel, but are human men and women who live and act; and the principal characters, particularly, in this way become the realities of history, instead of what they actually are, the creations of legend and myth.

WILLIAM H. CARPENTER

### FROM THE 'SNORRA EDDA'

#### THOR'S ADVENTURES ON HIS JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF THE GIANTS

From 'Northern Antiquities.' Bohn's Library, London, 1878

ONE day the god Thor set out, in his car drawn by two he-goats, and accompanied by Loki, on a journey. Night coming on, they put up at a peasant's cottage, when Thor killed his goats, and after flaying them put them in the kettle. When the flesh was sodden, he sat down with his fellow-traveler to supper, and invited the peasant and his family to partake of the repast. The peasant's son was named Thjalfi, and his daughter Röskva. Thor bade them throw all the bones into the goats' skins, which were spread out near the fireplace; but young Thjalfi broke one of the shank-bones with

his knife, to come at the marrow. Thor having passed the night in the cottage, rose at the dawn of day; and when he was dressed took his mallet Mjölfnir, and lifting it up, consecrated the goats' skins, which he had no sooner done than the two goats reassumed their wonted form, only that one of them now limped in one of its hind legs. Thor, perceiving this, said that the peasant or one of his family had handled the shank-bone of this goat too roughly, for he saw clearly that it was broken. It may readily be imagined how frightened the peasant was, when he saw Thor knit his brows, and grasp the handle of his mallet with such force that the joints of his fingers became white from the exertion. Fearing to be struck down by the very looks of the god, the peasant and his family made joint suit for pardon, offering whatever they possessed as an atonement for the offense committed. Thor, seeing their fear, desisted from his wrath and became more placable, and finally contented himself by requiring the peasant's children, Thjalfi and Röska, who became his bond-servants, and have followed him ever since.

Leaving his goats with the peasant, Thor proceeded eastward on the road to Jötunheim, until he came to the shores of a vast and deep sea, which having passed over, he penetrated into a strange country along with his companions, Loki, Thjalfi, and Röska. They had not gone far before they saw before them an immense forest, through which they wandered all day. Thjalfi was of all men the swiftest of foot. He bore Thor's wallet, but the forest was a bad place for finding anything eatable to stow in it. When it became dark, they searched on all sides for a place where they might pass the night, and at last came to a very large hall, with an entrance that took up the whole breadth of one of the ends of the building. Here they chose them a place to sleep in; but towards midnight were alarmed by an earthquake, which shook the whole edifice. Thor, rising up, called on his companions to seek with him a place of safety. On the right they found an adjoining chamber, into which they entered; but while the others, trembling with fear, crept into the furthest corner of this retreat, Thor remained at the doorway with his mallet in his hand, prepared to defend himself whatever might happen. A terrible groaning was heard during the night, and at dawn of day Thor went out and observed lying near him a man of enormous bulk, who slept and snored pretty loudly. Thor could now account for the noise they had heard overnight, and girding on his Belt of Prowess, increased that divine strength which he now stood in need of. The giant, awakening, rose up, and it is said that for once in his life Thor was afraid to make use of his mallet, and contented himself by simply asking the giant his name.

"My name is Skrymir," said the other; "but I need not ask thy name, for I know thou art the god Thor. But what hast thou done with my glove?" And stretching out his hand Skrymir picked up his glove, which Thor then perceived was what they had taken overnight for a hall, the chamber where they had sought refuge being the thumb. Skrymir then asked whether they

would have his fellowship, and Thor consenting, the giant opened his wallet and began to eat his breakfast. Thor and his companions having also taken their morning repast, though in another place, Skrymir proposed that they should lay their provisions together, which Thor also assented to. The giant then put all the meat into one wallet, which he slung on his back and went before them, taking tremendous strides, the whole day, and at dusk sought out for them a place where they might pass the night, under a large oak-tree. Skrymir then told them that he would lie down to sleep. "But take ye the wallet," he added, "and prepare your supper."

Skrymir soon fell asleep, and began to snore strongly, but incredible though it may appear, it must nevertheless be told that when Thor came to open the wallet he could not untie a single knot, nor render a single string looser than it was before. Seeing that his labor was in vain, Thor became wroth, and grasping his mallet with both hands while he advanced a step forward, launched it at the giant's head. Skrymir, awakening, merely asked whether a leaf had not fallen on his head, and whether they had supped and were ready to go to sleep. Thor answered that they were just going to sleep, and so saying, went and laid himself down under another oak-tree. But sleep came not that night to Thor, and when he remarked that Skrymir snored again so loud that the forest re-echoed with the noise, he arose, and grasping his mallet launched it with such force that it sunk into the giant's skull up to the handle. Skrymir, awakening, cried out: —

"What's the matter? did an acorn fall on my head? How fares it with thee, Thor?"

But Thor went away hastily, saying that he had just then awoke, and that as it was only midnight, there was still time for sleep. He however resolved that if he had an opportunity of striking a third blow, it should settle all matters between them. A little before daybreak he perceived that Skrymir was again fast asleep, and again grasping his mallet, dashed it with such violence that it forced its way into the giant's cheek up to the handle. But Skrymir sat up, and stroking his cheek, said: —

"Are there any birds perched on this tree? Methought when I awoke some moss from the branches fell on my head. What! art thou awake, Thor? Methinks it is time for us to get up and dress ourselves; but you have not now a long way before you to the city called Utgard. I have heard you whispering to one another that I am not a man of small dimensions; but if you come into Utgard you will see there many men much taller than myself. Wherefore I advise you, when you come there, not to make too much of yourselves, for the followers of Utgard-Loki will not brook the boasting of such mannikins as ye are. The best thing you could do would probably be to turn back again; but if you persist in going on, take the road that leads eastward, for mine now lies northward to those rocks which you may see in the distance."

Hereupon he threw his wallet over his shoulders and turned away from them into the forest, and I could never hear that Thor wished to meet with him a second time.

Thor and his companions proceeded on their way, and towards noon descried a city standing in the middle of a plain. It was so lofty that they were obliged to bend their necks quite back on their shoulders, ere they could see to the top of it. On arriving at the walls they found the gateway closed, with a gate of bars strongly locked and bolted. Thor, after trying in vain to open it, crept with his companions through the bars, and thus succeeded in gaining admission into the city. Seeing a large palace before them, with the door wide open, they went in and found a number of men of prodigious stature sitting on benches in the hall. Going further, they came before the king, Utgard-Loki, whom they saluted with great respect. Their salutations were however returned by a contemptuous look from the king, who after regarding them for some time said with a scornful smile:

"It is tedious to ask for tidings of a long journey, yet if I do not mistake me, that stripling there must be Aku-Thor. Perhaps," he added, addressing himself to Thor, "thou mayest be taller than thou appearest to be. But what are the feats that thou and thy fellows deem yourselves skilled in? for no one is permitted to remain here who does not in some feat or other excel all men."

"The feat I know," replied Loki, "is to eat quicker than anyone else; and in this I am ready to give a proof against anyone here who may choose to compete with me."

"That will indeed be a feat," said Utgard-Loki, "if thou performest what thou promisest; and it shall be tried forthwith."

He then ordered one of his men, who was sitting at the further end of the bench, and whose name was Logi, to come forward and try his skill with Loki. A trough filled with flesh-meat having been set on the hall floor, Loki placed himself at one end and Logi at the other, and each of them began to eat as fast as he could, until they met in the middle of the trough. But it was soon found that Loki had only eaten the flesh, whereas his adversary had devoured both flesh and bone, and the trough to boot. All the company therefore adjudged that Loki was vanquished.

Utgard-Loki then asked what feat the young man who accompanied Thor could perform. Thjalfi answered that he would run a race with anyone who might be matched against him. The king observed that skill in running was something to boast of, but that if the youth would win the match he must display great agility. He then arose and went with all who were present to a plain where there was good ground for running on, and calling a young man named Hugi, bade him run a match with Thjalfi. In the first course, Hugi so much outstripped his competitor that he turned back and met him, not far from the starting-place.

"Thou must ply thy legs better, Thjalfi," said Utgard-Loki, "if thou wilt win the match; though I must needs say that there never came a man here swifter of foot than thou art."

In the second course, Thjalfi was a full bow-shot from the goal when Hugi arrived at it.

"Most bravely dost thou run, Thjalfi," said Utgard-Loki, "though thou wilt not, methinks, win the match. But the third course must decide."

They accordingly ran a third time, but Hugi had already reached the goal before Thjalfi had got half-way. All who were present then cried out that there had been a sufficient trial of skill in this kind of exercise.

Utgard-Loki then asked Thor in what feats he would choose to give proofs of that dexterity for which he was so famous. Thor replied that he would begin a drinking match with anyone. Utgard-Loki consented, and entering the palace, bade his cup-bearer bring the large horn which his followers were obliged to drink out of, when they had trespassed in any way against established usage. The cup-bearer having presented it to Thor, Utgard-Loki said: —

"Whoever is a good drinker will empty that horn at a single draught, though some men make two of it; but the most puny drinker of all can do it at three."

Thor looked at the horn, which seemed of no extraordinary size, though somewhat long; however, as he was very thirsty, he set it to his lips, and without drawing breath, pulled as long and as deeply as he could, that he might not be obliged to make a second draught of it; but when he set the horn down and looked in, he could scarcely perceive that the liquor was diminished.

"'Tis well drunken," exclaimed Utgard-Loki, "though nothing much to boast of; and I would not have believed, had it been told me, that Asa-Thor could not take a greater draught; but thou no doubt meanest to make amends at the second pull."

Thor without answering went at it again with all his might; but when he took the horn from his mouth it seemed to him as if he had drunk rather less than before, although the horn could now be carried without spilling.

"How now! Thor," said Utgard-Loki: "Thou must not spare thyself more, in performing a feat, than befits thy skill; but if thou meanest to drain the horn at the third draught thou must pull deeply; and I must needs say that thou wilt not be called so mighty a man here as thou art among the Æsir, if thou showest no greater powers in other feats than methinks will be shown in this."

Thor, full of wrath, again set the horn to his lips and exerted himself to the utmost to empty it entirely; but on looking in, found that the liquor was only a little lower; upon which he resolved to make no further attempt, but gave back the horn to the cup-bearer.

"I now see plainly," said Utgard-Loki, "that thou art not quite so stout

as we thought thee; but wilt thou try any other feat? — though methinks thou art not likely to bear any prize away with thee hence.”

“I will try another feat,” replied Thor; “and I am sure such draughts as I have been drinking would not have been reckoned small among the Æsir; but what new trial hast thou to propose?”

“We have a very trifling game here,” answered Utgard-Loki, “in which we exercise none but children. It consists in merely lifting my cat from the ground; nor should I have dared to mention such a feat to Asa-Thor, if I had not already observed that thou art by no means what we took thee for.”

As he finished speaking, a large gray cat sprang on the hall floor. Thor, advancing, put his hand under the cat’s belly, and did his utmost to raise him from the floor; but the cat, bending his back, had — notwithstanding all Thor’s efforts — only one of his feet lifted up; seeing which, Thor made no further attempt.

“This trial has turned out,” said Utgard-Loki, “just as I imagined it would; the cat is large, but Thor is little in comparison with our men.”

“Little as ye call me,” answered Thor, “let me see who amongst you will come hither, now I am in wrath, and wrestle with me.”

“I see no one here,” said Utgard-Loki, looking at the men sitting on the benches, “who would not think it beneath him to wrestle with thee: let somebody, however, call hither that old crone, my nurse Elli, and let Thor wrestle with her if he will. She has thrown to the ground many a man not less strong and mighty than this Thor is.”

A toothless old woman then entered the hall, and was told by Utgard-Loki to take hold of Thor. The tale is shortly told. The more Thor tightened his hold on the crone the firmer she stood. At length, after a very violent struggle, Thor began to lose his footing, and was finally brought down upon one knee. Utgard-Loki then told them to desist, adding that Thor had now no occasion to ask any one else in the hall to wrestle with him, and it was also getting late. He therefore showed Thor and his companions to their seats, and they passed the night there in good cheer.

The next morning, at break of day, Thor and his companions dressed themselves and prepared for their departure. Utgard-Loki then came and ordered a table to be set for them, on which there was no lack of either victuals or drink. After the repast Utgard-Loki led them to the gate of the city, and on parting asked Thor how he thought his journey had turned out, and whether he had met with any men stronger than himself. Thor told him that he could not deny but that he had brought great shame on himself. “And what grieves me most,” he added, “is that ye call me a man of little worth.”

“Nay,” said Utgard-Loki, “it behoves me to tell thee the truth, now thou art out of the city; which so long as I live and have my way thou shalt never re-enter. And by my troth, had I known beforehand that thou hadst so much strength in thee, and wouldst have brought me so near to a great mishap, I

would not have suffered thee to enter this time. Know, then, that I have all along deceived thee by my illusions: first in the forest, where I arrived before thee, and there thou wert not able to untie the wallet, because I had bound it with iron wire, in such a manner that thou couldst not discover how the knot ought to be loosened. After this, thou gavest me three blows with thy mallet; the first, though the least, would have ended my days had it fallen on me, but I brought a rocky mountain before me which thou didst not perceive, and in this mountain thou wilt find three glens, one of them remarkably deep. These are the dints made by thy mallet. I have made use of similar illusions in the contests ye have had with my followers. In the first, Loki, like hunger itself, devoured all that was set before him; but Logi was in reality nothing else than ardent fire, and therefore consumed not only the meat but the trough which held it. Hugi, with whom Thjalfi contended in running, was Thought; and it was impossible for Thjalfi to keep pace with that. When thou in thy turn didst try to empty the horn, thou didst perform, by my troth, a deed so marvelous that had I not seen it myself I should never have believed it. For one end of that horn reached the sea, which thou wast not aware of, but when thou comest to the shore thou wilt perceive how much the sea has sunk by thy draughts, which have caused what is now called the ebb. Thou didst perform a feat no less wonderful by lifting up the cat; and to tell thee the truth, when we saw that one of his paws was off the floor, we were all of us terror-stricken; for what thou tookest for a cat was in reality the great Midgard serpent that encompasseth the whole earth, and he was then barely long enough to inclose it between his head and tail, so high had thy hand raised him up towards heaven. Thy wrestling with Elli was also a most astonishing feat, for there was never yet a man, nor ever shall be, whom Old Age — for such in fact was Elli — will not sooner or later lay low if he abide her coming. But now, as we are going to part, let me tell thee that it will be better for both of us if thou never come near me again; for shouldst thou do so, I shall again defend myself by other illusions, so that thou wilt never prevail against me.”

On hearing these words, Thor in a rage laid hold of his mallet and would have launched it at him; but Utgard-Loki had disappeared, and when Thor would have returned to the city to destroy it, he found nothing around him but a verdant plain. Proceeding therefore on his way, he returned without stopping to Thrúdvang.

Translated by I. A. Blackwell.

THE LAY OF THRYM

From the 'Poetic Edda'

**W**ROTH was Vingthor when he awoke,  
And his hammer he saw was missing.  
His beard he shook, his forehead struck,  
The son of Earth felt all around him;

And first of all these words he uttered: —  
"Hear now, Loki! what I now say,  
Which no one knows anywhere on earth,  
Nor in heaven above: our hammer is stolen!"

They went to the fair Freyja's dwelling,  
And he these words first of all said: —  
"Wilt thou me, Freyja, thy feather-garment lend,  
That perchance my hammer I may find?"

FREYJA

"That I would give thee, although of gold it were,  
And trust it to thee, though it were of silver."

Flew then Loki — the plumage rattled —  
Until he came beyond the Æsir's dwellings,  
And came within the Jötun's land.

On a mound sat Thrym, the Thursar's lord;  
For his greyhounds plaiting gold bands,  
And his horses' manes smoothing.

THRYM

"How goes it with the Æsir? how goes it with the Alfar?  
Why art thou come alone to Jötunheim?"

LOKI

"Ill it goes with the Æsir, ill it goes with the Alfar.  
Hast thou Hlorridi's hammer hidden?"

## THRYM

"I have Hlorridi's hammer hidden  
 Eight rasts beneath the earth;  
 It shall no man get again,  
 Unless he bring me Freyja to wife."

Flew then Loki — the plumage rattled —  
 Until he came beyond the Jötun's dwellings,  
 And came with the Æsir's courts;  
 There he met Thor, in the middle court,  
 Who these words first of all uttered: —

"Hast thou had success, as well as labor?  
 Tell me from the air the long tidings.  
 Oft of him who sits are the tales defective,  
 And he who lies down utters falsehood."

## LOKI

"I have had labor and success:  
 Thrym has thy hammer, the Thursar's lord.  
 It shall no man get again,  
 Unless he bring him Freyja to wife."

They went the fair Freyja to find;  
 And he those words first of all said: —  
 "Bind thee, Freyja, in bridal raiment:  
 We two must drive to Jötunheim."

Wroth then was Freyja, and with anger chafed;  
 All in Æsir's hall beneath her trembled;  
 In shivers flew the famed Brisinga necklace:  
 "Know me to be of women lewdest,  
 If with thee I drive to Jötunheim."

Straightway went the Æsir all to council,  
 And the Asynjur all to hold converse;  
 And deliberated the mighty gods,  
 How they Hlorridi's hammer might get back.

Then said Heimdall, of Æsir brightest —  
 He well foresaw like other Vanir —

"Let us clothe Thor with bridal raiment,  
Let him have the famed Brisinga necklace.

"Let by his side keys jingle,  
And woman's weeds fall round his knees,  
But on his breast place precious stones,  
And a neat coif set on his head."

Then said Thor, the mighty As: —  
"Me the Æsir will call womanish,  
If I let myself be clad in bridal raiment."

Then spake Loki, Laufey's son: —  
"Do thou, Thor! refrain from such-like words:  
Forthwith the Jötuns will Asgard inhabit,  
Unless thy hammer thou gettest back."

Then they clad Thor in bridal raiment,  
And with the noble Brisinga necklace;  
Let by his side keys jingle,  
And woman's weeds fall round his knees;  
And on his breast placed precious stones,  
And a neat coif set on his head.

Then said Loki, Laufey's son: —  
"I will with thee as a servant go;  
We two will drive to Jötunheim."

Straightway were the goats homeward driven,  
Hurried to the traces; they had fast to run.  
The rocks were shivered, the earth was in a blaze;  
Odin's son drove to Jötunheim.

Then said Thrym, the Thursar's lord: —  
"Rise up, Jötuns! and the benches deck,  
Now they bring me Freyja to wife,  
Njörd's daughter, from Noatun.

"Hither to our court let bring gold-horned cows,  
All-black oxen for the Jötun's joy.  
Treasures I have many, necklaces many;  
Freyja alone seemed to me wanting."

In the evening they early came,  
 And for the Jötuns beer was brought forth.  
 Thor alone an ox devoured, salmons eight,  
 And all the sweetmeats women should have.  
 Sif's consort drank three sals of mead.

Then said Thrym, the Thursar's prince: —  
 "Where has thou seen brides eat more voraciously?  
 I never saw brides feed more amply,  
 Nor a maiden drink more mead."

Sat the all-crafty serving-maid close by,  
 Who words fitting found against the Jötun's speech: —  
 "Freyja has nothing eaten for eight nights,  
 So eager was she for Jötunheim."

Under her veil he stooped, desirous to salute her,  
 But sprang back along the hall: —  
 "Why are so piercing Freyja's looks?  
 Methinks that fire burns from her eyes."

Sat the all-crafty serving-maid close by,  
 Who words fitting found against the Jötun's speech: —  
 "Freyja for eight nights has not slept,  
 So eager was she for Jötunheim."

In came the Jötun's luckless sister;  
 For a bride-gift she dared to ask: —  
 "Give me from thy hands the ruddy rings,  
 If thou wouldst gain my love,  
 My love and favor all."

Then said Thrym, the Thursar's lord: —  
 "Bring the hammer in, the bride to consecrate;  
 Lay Mjöllnir on the maiden's knee;  
 Unite us each with other by the hand of Vör."

Laughed Hlorridi's soul in his breast,  
 When the fierce-hearted his hammer recognized.  
 He first slew Thrym, the Thursar's lord,  
 And the Jötun race all crushed;

He slew the Jötun's aged sister,  
 Her who a bride-gift had demanded;

She a blow got instead of skillings,  
A hammer's stroke for many rings,  
So got Odin's son his hammer back.

Translated by Benjamin Thorpe.

# OF THE LAMENTATION OF GUDRUN OVER SIGURD DEAD

## FIRST LAY OF GUDRUN

**G**UDRUN of old days drew near to dying,  
As she sat in sorrow over Sigurd;  
Yet she sighed not nor smote hand on hand,  
Nor wailed she aught as other women.

Then went earls to her, full of all wisdom,  
Fain help to deal to her dreadful heart;  
Hushed was Gudrun of wail, or greeting,  
But with heavy woe was her heart a-breaking.

Bright and fair sat the great earl's brides,  
Gold-arrayed before Gudrun;  
Each told the tale of her great trouble,  
The bitterest bale she erst abode.

Then spake Giaflaug, Giuki's sister: —  
"Lo, upon earth I live most loveless,  
Who of five mates must see the ending,  
Of daughters twain and three sisters,  
Of brethren eight, and abide behind lonely."

Naught gat Gudrun of wail or greeting,  
So heavy was she for her dead husband;  
So dreadful-hearted for the King laid dead there.

Then spoke Herborg, Queen of Hunland: —  
"Crueler tale have I to tell of,  
Of my seven sons down in the Southlands,  
And the eighth man, my mate, felled in the death-mead.

"Father and mother, and four brothers,  
On the wide sea the winds and death played with;  
The billows beat on the bulwark boards.

"Alone must I sing o'er them, alone must I array them,  
 Alone must my hands deal with their departing;  
 And all this was in one season's wearing,  
 And none was left for love or solace.

"Then was I bound a prey of the battle,  
 When that same season wore to its ending;  
 As a tiring-may must I bind the shoon  
 Of the duke's high dame, every day at dawning.

"From her jealous hate gat I heavy mocking;  
 Cruel lashes she laid upon me;  
 Never met I better master  
 Or mistress worser in all the wide world."

Naught gat Gudrun of wail or greeting,  
 So heavy was she for her dead husband;  
 So dreadful-hearted for the King laid dead there.

Then spake Gullrond, Giuki's daughter: —  
 "O foster-mother, wise as thou mayst be,  
 Naught canst thou better the young wife's bale."  
 And she bade uncover the dead King's corpse.  
 She swept the sheet away from Sigurd,  
 And turned his cheek toward his wife's knees: —  
 "Look on thy loved one, lay lips to his lips,  
 E'en as thou wert clinging to thy King alive yet!"

Once looked Gudrun — one look only,  
 And saw her lord's locks lying all bloody,  
 The great man's eyes glazed and deadly,  
 And his heart's bulwark broken by sword-edge.

Back then sank Gudrun, back on the bolster;  
 Loosed was her head-array, red did her cheeks grow,  
 And the rain-drops ran down over her knees.

Then wept Gudrun, Giuki's daughter,  
 So that the tears flowed through the pillow;  
 As the geese withal that were in the home-field,  
 The fair fowls the may owned, fell a-screaming.

Then spake Gullrond, Giuki's daughter: —  
 "Surely knew I no love like your love

Among all men, on the mold abiding;  
Naught wouldst thou joy in without or within doors,  
O my sister, save beside Sigurd."

Then spake Gudrun, Giuki's daughter: —  
"Such was my Sigurd among the sons of Giuki,  
As is the king leek o'er the low grass waxing,  
Or a bright stone strung on band,  
Or a pearl of price on a prince's brow.

"Once was I counted by the king's warriors  
Higher than any of Herjan's mays;  
Now am I as little as the leaf may be,  
Amid wind-swept wood, now when dead he lieth.

"I miss from my seat, I miss from my bed,  
My darling of sweet speech. Wrought the sons of Giuki,  
Wrought the sons of Giuki, this sore sorrow;  
Yea, for their sister most sore sorrow.

"So may your lands lie waste on all sides,  
As ye have broken your bounden oaths!  
Ne'er shalt thou, Gunnar, the gold have joy of;  
The dear-bought rings shall drag thee to death,  
Whereon thou swarest oath unto Sigurd.

"Ah, in the days bygone, great mirth in the home-field,  
When my Sigurd set saddle on Grani,  
And they went their ways for the wooing of Brynhild!  
An ill day, an ill woman, and most ill hap!"

Then spake Brynhild, Budli's daughter: —  
"May the woman lack both love and children,  
Who gained greeting for thee, O Gudrun!  
Who gave thee this morning many words!"

Then spake Gullrond, Giuki's daughter: —  
"Hold peace of such words, thou hated of all folk!  
The bane of brave men hast thou been ever;  
All waves of ill wash over thy mind;  
To seven great kings hast thou been a sore sorrow,  
And the death of good-will to wives and women."

Then spake Brynhild, Budli's daughter: —  
 "None but Atli brought bale upon us;  
 My very brother, born of Budli,  
 When we saw in the hall of the Hunnish people  
 The gold a-gleaming on the kingly Giukings;  
 I have paid for that faring oft and fully,  
 And for the sight that then I saw."

By a pillar she stood and strained its wood to her;  
 From the eyes of Brynhild, Budli's daughter,  
 Flashed out fire, and she snorted forth venom,  
 As the sore wounds she gazed on of the dead-slain Sigurd.

'The Story of the Völsungs and Niblungs': by William Morris: translated by  
 Magnusson and Morris, London, 1870

### THE WAKING OF BRUNHILDE ON THE HINDFELL BY SIGURD

From 'The Story of Sigurd the Völsung,' by William Morris

**H**E looketh, and loveth her sore, and he longeth her spirit to move,  
 And awaken her heart to the world, that she may behold him and  
 love.

And he toucheth her breast and her hands, and he loveth her passing sore;  
 And he saith, "Awake! I am Sigurd"; but she moveth never the more.

Then he looked on his bare bright blade, and he said, "Thou — what wilt  
 thou do?"

For indeed as I came by the war-garth thy voice of desire I knew."  
 Bright burnt the pale blue edges, for the sunrise drew anear,  
 And the rims of the Shield-burg glittered, and the east was exceeding clear:  
 So the eager edges he setteth to the Dwarf-wrought battle-coat  
 Where the hammered ring-knit collar constraineth the woman's throat;  
 But the sharp Wrath biteth and rendeth, and before it fail the rings,  
 And, lo, the gleam of the linen, and the light of golden things;  
 Then he driveth the blue steel onward, and through the skirt, and out,  
 Till naught but the rippling linen is wrapping her about;  
 Then he deems her breath comes quicker and her breast begins to heave,  
 So he turns about the War-Flame and rends down either sleeve,  
 Till her arms lie white in her raiment, and a river of sun-bright hair  
 Flows free o'er bosom and shoulder and floods the desert bare.

Then a flush cometh over her visage and a sigh upheaveth her breast,  
 And her eyelids quiver and open, and she wakeneth into rest;  
 Wide-eyed on the dawning she gazeth, too glad to change or smile,  
 And but little moveth her body, nor speaketh she yet for a while;  
 And yet kneels Sigurd moveless, her wakening speech to heed,  
 While soft the waves of the daylight o'er the starless heavens speed,  
 And the gleaming rims of the Shield-burg yet bright and brighter grow,  
 And the thin moon hangeth her horns dead-white in the golden glow.  
 Then she turned and gazed on Sigurd, and her eyes met the Völsung's eyes,  
 And mighty and measureless now did the tide of his love arise.  
 For their longing had met and mingled, and he knew of her heart that she  
 loved,  
 As she spake unto nothing but him, and her lips with the speech-flood  
 moved: —

"Oh, what is the thing so mighty that my weary sleep hath torn,  
 And rent the fallow bondage, and the wan woe over-worn?"

He said, "The hand of Sigurd and the Sword of Sigmund's son,  
 And the heart that the Völsungs fashioned, this deed for thee have done."

But she said, "Where then is Odin that laid me here alow?  
 Long lasteth the grief of the world, and man-folk's tangled woe!"

"He dwelleth above," said Sigurd, "but I on the earth abide,  
 And I came from the Glittering Heath the waves of thy fire to ride."

But therewith the sun rose upward and lightened all the earth,  
 And the light flashed up to the heavens from the rims of the glorious  
 girth . . .

Then they turned and were knit together; and oft and o'er again  
 They craved, and kissed rejoicing, and their hearts were full and fain.

## ICELANDIC SAGAS

**I**T is to the long early period of the Commonwealth that we must look  
 for that Icelandic literature which is the glory of the Northern races.  
 This period of the Commonwealth extends over about four hundred  
 years; that is, from the first settlement by colonists from the Western Isles  
 and Norway in 870, to the submission to the Norwegian kings and the subse-  
 quent national changes towards the close of the thirteenth century. This

period again is divisible into three sections: the Heroic Age, the Saga-building Period, and the Literary Age. Up to close upon the middle of the tenth century, it is the poetry of the West Islands, rather than that of the Norse immigrants, which has to be accepted as the basis of Icelandic literature. For a hundred years thereafter — that is, from 930 to 1030 — the Icelandic poets were mostly singers abroad; Vikings whom the old restless spirit of adventure carried far west, far south, or back up to that turbulent East whence their forebears had come. The early period of saga-telling is a brief one, and is coincident with the entry of Christianity into the island, and while the events of the later sagas were in actual occurrence. Broadly, this is from 1030 to 1100. For one hundred and eighty years thereafter there comes the period known as the Literary Age, in which flourished Ari and his school, Thorodd, the historic saga-writers, Snorri and his school, and the famous Sturla. It was in the first half of the twelfth century that vernacular writing began. If the civil wars which prevailed from near the beginning of the thirteenth century until the fall of the great houses after the second civil wars, culminating years later in the submission to the Norwegian kings, interfered in some respects with the development of literature, it is significant to note that here in remote Iceland, as in Rome in the past and the medieval Italy and Elizabethan England, a period of stress and strife seems in many ways to have enhanced the literary sense, and to have proved advantageous for the cultivation of letters.

Although the sagas were first written about the middle of the twelfth century, the greater sagas were not composed into their present shape till about 1220. To that year or whereabouts is dated the 'Egilssaga'; the 'Laxdaela' about 1230, the 'Njala' about 1240, and the 'Eyrbyggja' about 1260. Snorri who died in 1241, and Sturla who died in 1284, are the two great names which are the ornament of that heroic period of Icelandic literature which makes a large part of the thirteenth century so memorable to its students. The oldest existing manuscript, however, does not go so far back. This is supposed to be the Flatey Manuscript, so called from its discovery in the monastery which bore that name. This Flatey Manuscript is of incalculable value apart from its literary interest; for it contains the sagas devoted to the history of the pre-Columbian discoveries of the Northmen. This manuscript was known to be in existence as early as the year 1395; that is, about one hundred years before the rediscovery of the American continent by Cabot and Columbus. One of the sagas included within its scope, that known as the Saga of Thorfinn, was actually written in Greenland, where during the years 1006 and 1007 the colonists, as the saga-man says, who had resorted thither from Iceland, "sought amusement in reciting history."

Jardar the Dane is supposed to have been the first person who made a voyage northward to Iceland, though its early name of Snowland was given to it by the pirate Nododd about the year 864. There is little question, however,

but that Iceland was known to the Irish Gaels, and possibly also to the Britons, before this. We have the authority of Ari Frode, in the 'Landnama Book,' in testimony of the fact that when the first Norsemen entered Iceland they found Irish monks already residing there.

It is seldom that the characteristics of a race are more clearly shown in the physiognomy of its literature than in the instance of the Icelanders and the Icelandic sagas. Their mental and physical intrepidity are proverbial; and this quality is exemplified again and again throughout the early and late sagas and Eddas. Directness, simplicity, and intrepidity, whether of mind or body — these qualities distinguish the Northmen of old, and the many characteristics of the national expression of their life. For the rest, we find in the sagas, along with the development of individual and national epic themes, a great many superstitions; some of them folk-lore survivals, and others integral portions of the somberly imaginative Scandinavian. While the combative spirit displayed throughout this early literature has its counterpart in the Celtic sagas, it is not combined as there with the same fantasy, color, and vivacity we find in the best early Gaelic chronicles. But throughout we hear in them the clash of swords, the surge of the sea, the blowing of the north wind, the full simple heroic words of the heroic man, the full simple words of passion and devotion of heroic women, and above all and through all the influence of mighty forces of destiny and fate. In the later sagas this element of the workings of fate degenerates into so-called religious teaching, but even here the old pagan spirit is observable; as in the almost passionate emphasis laid upon the doctrine of retribution for sin, and in the somber pictures of the life which awaits the sinner in the next world.

Here is an instance illustrative of the physical courage of the old Northern mind. It is from the death-song of Ragnar Lodbrok, a poem belonging to the close of the eighth century, and with the peculiar alliterative effects characteristic of the metrical literature of that period: —

We hewed with our swords —  
quick goes all to my heirs.  
Grim stings the adder;  
snake house in my heart;  
but soon Vithris' lance  
shall stand fast in Ella.  
Rage will swell my sons  
to hear their father's doom;  
ne'er will those gallant youths  
rest till avenged.

We hewed with our swords;  
full fifty times my lance,

the messenger of death,  
 raged through the battle.  
 It was my boyhood's play  
 to stain my lance with blood.  
 Methinks than I, no king  
 can boast of brighter deeds.  
 We must to Æsir call,  
 and without grief I go.

We hewed with our swords;  
 home invite we the Diser,  
 the maidens of Oden.  
 With them and the Æsir  
 high seated shall we  
 there the mead quaff;  
 fled are my life's hours,  
 yet I die smiling.

So likewise Harold, the valiant rover, tells us of his own courage, lamenting that after all a Russian maid, Elizabeth daughter of Janislaus, should refuse him. We give only a part of the poem: —

My ship hath sailed round the isle of Sicily;  
 Then were we all splendid and gay.  
 My mirror-laden ship then swiftly along the waves,  
 Eager for the fight,  
 I thought my sails would never slacken:  
 And yet a Russian maid disdains me.

With the men of Drontheim I fought in my youth.  
 They had troops much greater in numbers,  
 Dreadful was the conflict;  
 Young as I was, I left their young king dead in the fight:  
 And yet a Russian maid disdains me.

Well do I know the eight exercises:  
 I fight with courage,  
 I keep a firm seat on horseback,  
 And skilled am I in swimming.  
 Along the ice glide I on skates,  
 I excel in darting the lance,  
 I am dexterous at the oar:  
 And yet a Russian maid disdains me.

As an example of prose narrative, here is a brief excerpt descriptive of the death of the Jarl Ronald, A.D. 1046, as told in the famous 'Orkney Saga':

"Earl Ronald lay at Kirkwall and collected thither all sorts of supplies for the winter, having with him a large following whom he entertained regardless of cost. A little before Jule, the earl started with a numerous retinue for the Lesser Papa to fetch malt. In the evening, as they sat a long time baking their limbs at the fire, the man who kept it up said the fuel was getting short. On which the jarl made a slip of the tongue. He said, 'We shall be cold enough when this fire is burnt out.' But he meant to have said, 'We shall be warm enough.' And when he perceived it he said, 'I made a slip of the tongue [misspoke]; I never did so before, that I can mind. This reminds me of what King Olaf, my foster-father, said at Sticklestad when I observed his slip of the tongue. He said that if ever I made a slip of the tongue, I must make up my mind to have a short time left to live. Maybe my kinsman Thorfinn is alive.' At this moment they heard people all round the house. Earl Thorfinn was come, and they set fire to the buildings and heaped up a great pile before the doors. Thorfinn permitted all but the earl's men to go out. And when most of the people had come out, a man came into the doorway, dressed in linen clothes only, and begged Thorfinn to give the deacon a helping hand. At the same moment he placed his hand on the balk of wood (across the door), sprang right over it and beyond the ring of men, and fled away in the darkness of the night. Earl Thorfinn bade them follow after him, and said, 'There fared the earl: it was one of his feats of strength and nobody's else.' The men set off in search, separating into knots. Thorkell Foster searched along the shore, when they heard a dog bark among the rocks. Earl Ronald had his lapdog with him. The earl was captured, and Thorkell bade his men kill him, offering them money. But all the same they refused. So Thorkell himself slew him, for he knew that one or the other of them would have to do it. Earl Thorfinn now came up, and blamed not the deed. They spent the night on the island slaughtering the whole of Ronald's followers. Next morning they laded the merchant ship with malt, then went aboard, placing in the prow and stern the shields which Ronald and his men had, and no more men upon her than had come with the earl, and then rowed to Kirkwall. As Ronald's men supposed that it must be the earl and his followers coming back, they went to meet them unarmed. Earl Thorfinn seized and killed thirty, most of them being King Magnus' men and friends of his. One retainer of the king's he let go, bidding him fare to Norway and tell King Magnus the news."

It is, however, in the rough meters of Scandinavian poetry that one most easily apprehends the genius of this Northern people. To take an extract (not much earlier in date than the foregoing, namely in 1014) from the famous 'Njalssaga.' The extract in question is known as the 'Spædom of the

Norns,' and is supposed to have been based on the vision of some man of Caithness gifted with second sight to foretell the result of the great battle of Clontarf. The following translation is by Sir G. Dasent:

See! warp is stretched for warrior's fall;  
 Lo, weft in loom, 'tis wet with blood;  
 Now, fight foreboding, 'neath friends' swift fingers  
 Our gray woof waxeth with war's alarms,  
 Our warp blood-red, our weft corse-blue.

This woof is y-woven with entrails of men;  
 This warp is hard weighted with heads of the slain;  
 Spears blood-besprinkled for spindles we use,  
 Our loom ironbound, and arrows our reels;  
 With swords for our shuttles this war-woof we work;  
 So weave we, weird sisters, our war-winning woof.

Now war-winner walketh to weave in her turn,  
 Now Sword-swingers steppeth, now Swift-stroke, now Storm;  
 When they speed the shuttle how spear-heads shall flash!  
 Shields crash, and helm-gnawer on harness bite hard!

Wind we, wind swiftly our war-winning woof,  
 Woof erst for king youthful, foredoomed as his own.  
 Forth now we will ride, then, through the ranks rushing,  
 Be busy where friends blows blithe give and take.

Wind we, wind swiftly our war-winning woof;  
 After that let us steadfastly stand by the brave king;  
 Then men shall mark mournful their shields red with gore,  
 How Sword-stroke and Spear-thrust stood stout by the prince.

Wind we, wind swiftly our war-winning woof,  
 When sword-bearing rovers to banners rush on.  
 Mind, maidens, we spare not one life in the fray;  
 We corse-choosing sisters have charge of the slain.

Now new-coming nations that island shall rule,  
 Who on outlying headlands abode ere the fight;  
 I say that king mighty to death now is done,  
 Now low before spear-point that Earl bows his head.

Soon over all Ersemen sharp sorrow shall fall,  
 That woe to those warriors shall wane nevermore.

Our woof now is woven, now battle-field waste,  
O'er land and o'er water war tidings shall leap.

Now surely 'tis gruesome to gaze all around,  
When blood-red through heaven drives cloud-rack o'erhead;  
Air soon shall be deep-hued with dying men's blood,  
When this our spaedom comes speedy to pass.

So cheerily chant we charms for the young king;  
Come, maidens, lift loudly his war-winning lay;  
Let him who now listens learn well with his ears,  
And gladden brave swordsmen with bursts of war's song.

Now mount we our horses, now bare we our brands,  
Now haste we hard, maidens, hence, far, far away.

WILLIAM SHARP

### FROM THE 'NJALSSAGA'

[“The subject, like a Greek trilogy, falls into three divisions, each containing its own plot and *dramatis personæ*; all three loosely connected in one saga by the weaker and later parts of the work. (1) The first plot (founded, as we believe, on a now lost ‘Gunnarssaga’) tells of the friendship between Gunnar, the simple-minded brave chief, the ideal hero of his age, and the wise lawyer Njal, a man of good counsel and peace who never bore weapons. The cold envious heart of Hallgerda, which is here contrasted with the proud honesty of Bergthora, has caused the death of her two former husbands; and at length, though she is unable to break the tie that binds Gunnar to his trusted counselor, Hrut’s prophecy and Njal’s forebodings are finally fulfilled, and after a brave defense the Lithend chief is slain in his own house by his half regretful foes. His son and Njal avenge his death. Then comes an episode abroad which is merely a link to connect the second and most important of the three dramas with the foregoing one, and to introduce fresh characters on the scene. (2) Njal is now the central figure; his character is heightened, he is almost a sage and prophet; the writer’s highest skill is lavished on this part of the saga. The death of Thrain, slain by the sons of Njal, at length brings down on himself and his house the fate which he is powerless to avert. The adoption of Hoskuld, his foeman’s son, by which he strives to heal the feud, is but a step to this end. Eventually, to further his foster-son’s interests, he obtains for him one of the new “priesthoods” which were set up in con-

sequence of the great constitutional reform he had carried. Upon this, the hatred of the old aristocracy whose position he had thus assailed broke out in the guile of Valgard and his cunning son Mord, who sowed hatred between the Whiteness Priest and his foster-brethren. A fancied slight at last rouses these latter to murder the innocent Hoskuld. Njal, cut to the heart, still strives for peace; but a few bitter words undo all his work, and the end he has foretold is near. The scenes at the Althing, which relieve the story by introducing portraits of every great chief of that day in Iceland, boldly and humorously depicted, are very noteworthy. Flosi, the widow's kinsman, driven unwillingly to action, now takes up the holy duty of blood-revenge; and by his means Njal and his wife and sons perish in the smoke of their burning homestead. This awful catastrophe closes the second part. (3) Of the concluding drama Flosi is the hero, and the plot tells of the Burner's fate. The great suit against them at the Althing fails by a legal technicality; and the ensuing battle is stayed by Hall and Snorri, by whose award they are exiled. But Kari, Njal's son-in-law, who alone escaped from the fire, pursues them with unrelenting vengeance; one by one they fall by various fates: and when in the real battle of Clontarf, 1014, those of them who have hitherto evaded their destiny perish, fighting against the new Faith, by the swords of the Irish, his revenge is at length complete, and Flosi and he are reconciled." — Gudbrand Vigfusson]

#### THE ONSLAUGHT ON BERGTHORSKNOLL

Now Flosi speaks to his men, "Now we will ride to Bergthorsknoll, and come thither before supper-time."

They do so. There was a dell in the knoll, and they rode thither, and tethered their horses there, and stayed there till the evening was far spent.

Then Flosi said, "Now we will go straight up to the house, and keep close, and walk slow, and see what counsel they will take."

Njal stood out of doors, and his sons, and Kari and all the serving-men, and they stood in array to meet them in the yard, and they were near thirty of them.

Flosi halted and said, "Now we shall see what counsel they take, for it seems to me, if they stand out of doors to meet us, as though we should never get the mastery over them."

"Then is our journey bad," says Grani Gunnar's son, "if we are not to dare to fall on them."

"Nor shall that be," says Flosi; "for we will fall on them though they stand out of doors; but we shall pay that penalty, that many will not go away to tell which side won the day."

Njal said to his men, "See ye now what a great band of men they have."

"They have both a great and well-knit band," says Skarphedinn; "but this is why they make a halt now, because they think it will be a hard struggle to master us."

"That cannot be why they halt," says Njal; "and my will is that our men go indoors, for they had hard work to master Gunnar of Lithend, though he was alone to meet them; but here is a strong house as there was there, and they will be slow to come to close quarters."

"This is not to be settled in that wise," says Skarphedinn, "for those chiefs fell on Gunnar's house, who were so noble-minded, that they would rather turn back than burn him, house and all; but these will fall on us at once with fire, if they cannot get at us in any other way, for they will leave no stone unturned to get the better of us; and no doubt they think, as is not unlikely, that it will be their deaths if we escape out of their hands. Besides, I am unwilling to let myself be stifled indoors like a fox in his earth."

"Now," said Njal, "as often it happens, my sons, ye set my counsel at naught, and show me no honor, but when ye were younger ye did not so, and then your plans were better furthered."

"Let us do," said Helgi, "as our father wills; that will be best for us."

"I am not so sure of that," says Skarphedinn, "for now he is 'fey'; but still I may well humor my father in this, by being burnt indoors along with him, for I am not afraid of my death."

Then he said to Kari, "Let us stand by one another well, brother-in-law, so that neither parts from the other."

"That I have made up my mind to do," says Kari; "but if it should be otherwise doomed — well! then it must be as it must be, and I shall not be able to fight against it."

"Avenge us, and we will avenge thee," says Skarphedinn, "if we live after thee."

Kari said it should be.

Then they all went in, and stood in array at the door.

"Now are they all 'fey,'" said Flosi, "since they have gone indoors, and we will go right up to them as quickly as we can, and throng as close as we can before the door, and give heed that none of them, neither Kari nor Njal's sons, get away; for that were our bane."

So Flosi and his men came up to the house, and set men to watch round the house, if there were any secret doors in it. But Flosi went up to the front of the house with his men.

Then Hroald Auzur's son ran up to where Skarphedinn stood, and thrust at him. Skarphedinn hewed the spearhead off the shaft as he held it, and made another stroke at him, and the axe fell on the top of the shield, and dashed back the whole shield on Hroald's body, but the upper horn of the

axe caught him on the brow, and he fell at full length on his back, and was dead at once.

"Little chance had that one with thee, Skarphedinn," said Kari, "and thou art our boldest."

"I'm not so sure of that," says Skarphedinn, and he drew up his lips and smiled.

Kari, and Grim, and Helgi threw out many spears, and wounded many men; but Flosi and his men could do nothing.

At last Flosi said, "We have already gotten great manscathe in our men; many are wounded, and he slain whom we would choose last of all. It is now clear that we shall never master them with weapons; many now there be who are not so forward in fight as they boasted, and yet they were those who goaded us on most. I say this most to Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, who were the least willing to spare their foes. But still we shall have to take to some other plan for ourselves, and now there are but two choices left, and neither of them good. One is to turn away, and that is our death; the other, to set fire to the house, and burn them inside it; and that is a deed which we shall have to answer for heavily before God, since we are Christian men ourselves; but still we must take to that counsel."

#### NJAL'S BURNING

Now they took fire, and made a great pile before the doors. Then Skarphedinn said, "What, lads! are ye lighting a fire, or are ye taking to cooking?"

"So it shall be," answered Grani Gunnar's son; "and thou shalt not need to be better done."

"Thou repayest me," said Skarphedinn, "as one may look for from the man that thou art. I avenged thy father, and thou settest most store by that duty which is farthest from thee."

Then the women threw whey on the fire, and quenched it as fast as they lit it. Some, too, brought water, or slops.

Then Kol Thorstein's son said to Flosi, "A plan comes into my mind; I have seen a loft over the hall among the cross-trees, and we will put the fire in there, and light it with the vetch-stack that stands just above the house."

Then they took the vetch-stack and set fire to it, and they who were inside were not aware of it till the whole hall was a-blaze over their heads.

Then Flosi and his men made a great pile before each of the doors, and then the women folk who were inside began to weep and to wail.

Njal spoke to them and said, "Keep up your hearts, nor utter shrieks, for this is but a passing storm, and it will be long before ye have another such;

and put your faith in God, and believe that he is so merciful that he will not let us burn both in this world and the next."

Such words of comfort had he for them all, and others still more strong.

Now the whole house began to blaze. Then Njal went to the door and said, "Is Flosi so near that he can hear my voice?"

Flosi said that he could hear it.

"Wilt thou," said Njal, "take an atonement from my sons, or allow any men to go out?"

"I will not," answers Flosi, "take any atonement from thy sons, and now our dealings shall come to an end once for all, and I will not stir from this spot till they are all dead; but I will allow the women and children and house-carles to go out."

Then Njal went into the house, and said to the fold, "Now all those must go out to whom leave is given, and so go thou out, Thorghalla Asgrim's daughter, and all the people also with thee who may."

Then Thorhalla said, "This is another parting between me and Helgi than I thought of a while ago; but still I will egg on my father and brothers to avenge this manscath which is wrought here."

"Go, and good go with thee," said Njal, "for thou art a brave woman."

After that she went out and much folk with her.

Then Astrid of Deepback said to Helgi Njal's son, "Come thou out with me, and I will throw a woman's cloak over thee, and tie thy head with a kerchief."

He spoke against it at first, but at last he did so at the prayer of others.

So Astrid wrapped the kerchief round Helgi's head, but Thorhilda, Skarphedinn's wife, threw the cloak over him, and he went out between them, and then Thorgerda Njal's daughter, and Helga her sister, and many other folk went out too.

But when Helgi came out Flosi said, "That is a tall woman and broad across the shoulders that went yonder, take her and hold her."

But when Helgi heard that, he cast away the cloak. He had got his sword under his arm, and hewed at a man, and the blow fell on his shield and cut off the point of it, and the man's leg as well. Then Flosi came up and hewed at Helgi's neck, and took off his head at a stroke.

Then Flosi went to the door and called out to Njal, and said he would speak with him and Bergthora.

Now Njal does so, and Flosi said, "I will offer thee, master Njal, leave to go out, for it is unworthy that thou shouldst burn indoors."

"I will not go out," said Njal, "for I am an old man, and little fitted to avenge my sons, but I will not live in shame."

Then Flosi said to Bergthora, "Come thou out, housewife, for I will for no sake burn thee indoors."

"I was given away to Njal young," said Bergthora, "and I have promised him this, that we would both share the same fate."

After that they both went back into the house.

"What counsel shall we now take?" said Bergthora.

"We will go to our bed," says Njal, "and lay us down; I have long been eager for rest."

Then she said to the boy Thord, Kari's son, "Thee will I take out, and thou shalt not burn in here."

"Thou hast promised me this, grandmother," says the boy, "that we should never part so long as I wished to be with thee; but methinks it is much better to die with thee and Njal than to live after you."

Then she bore the boy to her bed, and Njal spoke to his steward and said, "Now thou shalt see where we lay us down, and how I lay us out, for I mean not to stir an inch hence, whether reek or burning smart me, and so thou wilt be able to guess where to look for our bones."

He said he would do so.

There had been an ox slaughtered and the hide lay there. Njal told the steward to spread the hide over them, and he did so.

So there they lay down both of them in their bed, and put the boy between them. Then they signed themselves and the boy with the cross, and gave over their souls into God's hand, and that was the last word that men heard them utter.

Then the steward took the hide and spread it over them, and went out afterwards. Kettle of the Mark caught hold of him, and dragged him out; he asked carefully after his father-in-law Njal, but the steward told him the whole truth. Then Kettle said, "Great grief hath been sent on us, when we have had to share such ill-luck together."

Skarphedinn saw how his father laid him down, and how he laid himself out, and then he said, "Our father goes early to bed, and that is what was to be looked for, for he is an old man."

Then Skarphedinn, and Kari, and Grim caught the brands as fast as they dropped down, and hurled them out at them, and so it went on awhile. Then they hurled spears in at them, but they caught them all as they flew, and sent them back again.

Then Flosi bade them cease shooting, "for all feats of arms will go hard with us when we deal with them; ye may well wait till the fire overcomes them."

So they do that, and shoot no more.

Then the great beams out of the roof began to fall, and Skarphedinn said, "Now must my father be dead, and I have neither heard groan nor cough from him."

Then they went to the end of the hall, and there had fallen down a cross-beam inside which was much burnt in the middle.

Kari spoke to Skarphedinn, and said, "Leap thou out here, and I will help thee to do so, and I will leap out after thee, and then we shall both get away if we set about it so, for hitherward blows all the smoke."

"Thou shalt leap first," said Skarphedinn; "but I will leap straightway on thy heels."

"That is not wise," says Kari, "for I can get out well enough elsewhere, though it does not come about here."

"I will not do that," says Skarphedinn; "leap thou out first, but I will leap after thee at once."

"It is bidden to every man," says Kari, "to seek to save his life while he has a choice, and I will do so now; but still this parting of ours will be in such wise that we shall never see one another more; for if I leap out of the fire, I shall have no mind to leap back into the fire to thee, and then each of us will have to fare his own way."

"It joys me, brother-in-law," says Skarphedinn, "to think that if thou gettest away thou wilt avenge me."

Then Kari took up a blazing bench in his hand, and runs up along the cross-beam, then he hurls the bench out at the roof, and it fell among those who were outside.

Then they ran away, and by that time all Kari's upper clothing and his hair were a-blaze, then he threw himself down from the roof, and so crept along with the smoke.

Then one man said who was nearest, "Was that a man that leapt out at the roof?"

"Far from it," says another; "more likely it was Skarphedinn who hurled a firebrand at us."

After that they had no more mistrust.

Kari ran till he came to a stream, and then he threw himself down into it, and so quenched the fire on him.

After that he ran along under shelter of the smoke into a hollow, and rested him there, and that has since been called Kari's Hollow.

#### SKARPHEDINN'S DEATH

Now it is to be told of Skarphedinn that he runs out on the cross-beam straight after Kari, but when he came to where the beam was most burnt, then it broke down under him. Skarphedinn came down on his feet, and tried again the second time, and climbs up the wall with a run, then down on him came the wall-plate, and he toppled down again inside.

Then Skarphedinn said, "Now one can see what will come"; and then he went along the side wall. Gunnar Lambi's son leapt up on the wall and sees Skarphedinn, he spoke thus, "Weapest thou now, Skarphedinn?"

"Not so," says Skarphedinn; "but true it is that the smoke makes one's eyes smart, but is it as it seems to me, dost thou laugh?"

"So it is surely," says Gunnar, "and I have never laughed since thou slewest Thrain on Markfleet."

Then Skarphedinn said, "Here now is a keepsake for thee"; and with that he took out of his purse the jaw-tooth which he had hewn out of Thrain, and threw it at Gunnar, and struck him in the eye, so that it started out and lay on his cheek.

Then Gunnar fell down from the roof.

Skarphedinn then went to his brother Grim, and they held one another by the hand and trode the fire; but when they came to the middle of the hall Grim fell down dead.

Then Skarphedinn went to the end of the house, and then there was a great crash, and down fell the roof. Skarphedinn was then shut in between it and the gable, and so he could not stir a step thence.

Flosi and his band stayed by the fire until it was broad daylight; then came a man riding up to them. Flosi asked him for his name, but he said his name was Geirmund, and that he was a kinsman of the sons of Sigfus.

"Ye have done a mighty deed," he says.

"Men," said Flosi, "will call it both a mighty deed and an ill deed, but that can't be helped now."

"How many men have lost their lives here?" asks Geirmund.

"Here have died," says Flosi, "Njal and Bergthora and all their sons, Thord Kari's son, Kari Solmund's son, but besides these we cannot say for a surety, because we know not their names."

"Thou tellest him now dead," said Geirmund, "with whom we have gossiped this morning."

"Who is that?" says Flosi.

"We two," says Geirmund, "I and my neighbor Bard, met Kari Solmund's son, and Bard gave him his horse, and his hair and his upper clothes were burned off him!"

"Had he any weapons?" asks Flosi.

"He had the sword 'Life-luller,'" says Geirmund, "and one edge of it was blue with fire, and Bard and I said that it must have become soft, but he answered thus, that he would harden it in the blood of the sons of Sigfus or the other Burners."

"What said he of Skarphedinn?" said Flosi.

"He said both he and Grim were alive," answers Geirmund, "when they parted; but he said that now they must be dead."

"Thou hast told us a tale," said Flosi, "which bodes us no idle peace, for that man hath now got away who comes next to Gunnar of Lithend in all things; and now, ye sons of Sigfus, and ye other burners, know this, that such a great blood feud, and hue and cry will be made about this burn-

ing, that it will make many a man headless, but some will lose all their goods. Now I doubt much whether any man of you, ye sons of Sigfus, will dare to stay in his house; and that is not to be wondered at; and so I will bid you all to come and stay with me in the east, and let us all share one fate."

Translated by George Webbe Dasent

## ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

THE earliest recorded utterances of a race, whether in poetry or in prose, become to the representatives of this race in later days a treasure beyond price. The value of such monuments of the remote past is manifold. In them we first begin to become really acquainted with ancestors of the people of today, even though we may have read in the pages of earlier writers of alien descent much that is of great concurrent interest. Through the medium of the native saga, epic, and meager chronicle, we see for the first time their real though dim outlines, moving in and out of the mists that obscure the dawn of history; and these outlines become more and more distinct as the literary remains of succeeding periods become more abundant and present more varied aspects of life. We come gradually to know what manner of men and women were these ancestors, what in peace and in war were their customs, what their family and social relations, their food and drink, their dress, their systems of law and government, their religion and morals, what were their art instincts, what were their ideals.

This is essential material for the construction of history in its complete sense. And this evidence, when subjected to judicious criticism, is trustworthy; for the ancient story-teller and poet reflects the customs and ideas and ideals of his own time, even though the combination of agencies and the preternatural proportions of the actors and their deeds belong to the imagination. The historian must know how to supplement and to give life and interest to the colorless succession of dates, names, and events of the chronicler, by means of these imaginative yet truth-bearing creations of the poet.

Remnants of ancient poetry and legend have again an immediate value in proportion as they exhibit a free play of fine imagination; that is, according as they possess the power of stirring to response the esthetic feeling of subsequent ages — as they possess the true poetic quality. This gift of imagination varies greatly among races as among individuals, and the earliest manifestations of it frequently throw a clear light upon apparently eccentric tendencies developed in a literature in later times.

For these reasons, added to a natural family pride in them, the early literary monuments of the Anglo-Saxons should be cherished by us as among the most valued possessions of the race.

The first Teutonic language to be reduced to writing was the Gothic. Considerable portions of a translation of the Bible into that language, made by Bishop Ulfilas in the fourth century, still remain. But this cannot be called the beginning of a literature; for there is no trace of original creative impulse.

The Gothic movement, too, seems to have ceased immediately after its beginning. It is elsewhere that we must seek for the rise of a real Teutonic literature. We shall not find it till after the lapse of several centuries; and we find it not among the tribes that remained in the fatherland, nor with those that had broken into and conquered parts of the Roman Empire, only to be absorbed and to blend with other races into Romanic nations. The proud distinction belongs to the Low German tribes that had created an England in Britain.

The conquest of Britain by the Anglo-Saxons, begun in 449, seemed at first to promise only retrogression and the ruin of an existing civilization. These fierce barbarians found among the Celts of Britain a Roman culture, and the Christian religion exerting its influence for order and humanity. Their mission seemed to be to destroy both. In their original homes in the forests of northern Germany, they had come little if at all into contact with Roman civilization. At any rate, we may assume that they had felt no Roman influence capable of stemming their national and ethnical tendencies. We cannot yet solve the difficult problem of the extent of their mingling with the conquered Celts in Britain. In spite of learned opinions to the contrary, the evidence now available seems to point to only a small infusion of Celtic blood. The conquerors seem to have settled down to their new homes with all the heathenism and most of the barbarism they had brought from their old home, a Teutonic people still.

In these ruthless, plundering barbarians, whose very breath was battle, and who seemed for the time the very genius of disorder and ruin, there existed, nevertheless, potentialities of humanity, order, and enlightenment far exceeding those of the system they displaced. In all their barbarism there was a certain nobility; their courage was unflinching; the fidelity, even unto death, ofthane to lord, repaid the open-handed generosity of lord to thane; they honored truth; and even after we allow for the exaggerated claims made for a chivalrous devotion that did not exist, we find that they held their women in higher respect than was usual even among many more enlightened peoples.

There are few more remarkable narratives in history than that of the facility and enthusiasm with which the Anglo-Saxons, a people conservative then as now to the degree of extreme obstinacy, accepted Christianity and the new learning which followed in the train of the new religion. After a few lapses into paganism in some localities, we find these people, who lately had swept Christian Britain with fire and sword, themselves became most zealous followers of Christ. Under the influence of the Roman missionaries who, under St. Augustine, had begun their work in the south in 597 among the Saxons and Jutes, and under the combined influence of Irish and Roman missionaries in the north and east among the Angles, theological and secular studies were pursued with avidity. By the end of the seventh century we find Anglo-Saxon missionaries, with St. Boniface at their head,

carrying Christianity and enlightenment to the pagan German tribes on the Continent.

The torch had been passed to the Anglo-Saxon, and a new center of learning, York — the old Roman capital, now the chief city of the Northumbrian Angles — became famous throughout Europe. Indeed, York seemed for a time the chief hope for preserving and advancing Christian culture; for the danger of a relapse into dense ignorance had become imminent in the rest of Europe. Bede, born about 673, a product of this Northumbrian culture, represented the highest learning of his day. He wrote a vast number of works in Latin, treating nearly all the branches of knowledge existing in his day. His 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People' is the chief source for early English history. Alcuin, another Northumbrian, born about 735, was called by Charlemagne to be tutor for himself and his children, and to organize the educational system of his realm. He wrote numerous text-books, commentaries, and epistles. His Latin 'Poem on the Saints of the Church at York' gives a glimpse of the cathedral school and library. He later made the Abbey of St. Martin at Tours a center for the copying of manuscripts. Other great names might be added to show the extent and brilliancy of the new learning. It was more remarkable among the Angles; and only at a later day, when the great schools of the north had gone up in fire and smoke in the pitiless invasion of the Northmen, did the West Saxons become the leaders, almost the only representatives, of the literary impulse among the Anglo-Saxons.

It is significant that the first written English that we know of contains the first Christian English king's provision for peace and order in his kingdom. The laws of Athelbert, King of Kent, who died in 616, were written down early in the seventh century. This code, as it exists, is the oldest surviving monument of English prose. The laws of Ine, King of the West Saxons, were put into writing about 690. These collections can scarcely be said to have a literary value; but they are of the utmost importance as throwing light upon the early customs of our race, and the laws of Ine may be considered as the foundation of modern English law. Many of these laws were probably much older; but they were now first codified and systematically enforced. The language employed is direct, almost crabbed; but occasionally the Anglo-Saxon love of figure shows itself.

"In case anyone burn a tree in a wood, and it came to light who did it, let him pay the full penalty, and give sixty shillings, *because fire is a thief*. If one fell in a wood ever so many trees, and it be found out afterwards, let him pay for three trees, each with thirty shillings. He is not required to pay for more of them, however many they may be, *because the axe is a reporter and not a thief*." [The italicized sentences are evidently current sayings.]

But even these remains, important and interesting as they are, may not be called the beginning of a vernacular literature. It is among the Angles of Northumbria that we shall find the earliest native and truly literary awaken-

ing in England. Here we perceive the endeavor to do something more than merely to aid the memory of men in preserving necessary laws and records of important events. The imagination had become active. The impulse was felt to give expression to deep emotions, to sing the deeds and noble character of some hero embodying the loftiest ideals of the time and the race, to utter deep religious feeling. There was an effort to do this in a form showing harmony in theme and presentation. Here we find displayed a feeling for art, often crude, but still a true and native impulse. This activity produced or gave definite form to the earliest Anglo-Saxon poetry, a poetry often of a very high quality; perhaps never of the highest, but always of intense interest. We may claim even a greater distinction for the early fruit of Anglo-Saxon inspiration. Stopford Brooke says: "With the exception of perhaps a few Welsh and Irish poems, it is the only vernacular poetry in Europe, outside of the classic tongues, which belongs to so early a time as the seventh and eighth centuries."

The oldest of these poems belong in all save their final form to the ancient days in Northern Germany. They bear evidence of transmission, with varying details, from gleeman to gleeman, till they were finally carried over to England and there edited, often with discordant interpolations and modifications, by Christian scribes. Tacitus tells us that at his time songs or poems were a marked feature in the life of the Germans; but we cannot trace the clue further. To these more ancient poems many others were added by Christian Northumbrian poets, and we find that a large body of poetry had grown up in the North before the movement was entirely arrested by the destroying Northmen. Not one of these poems, unless we except a few fragmentary verses, has come down to us in the Northumbrian dialect. Fortunately they had been transcribed by the less poetically gifted West Saxons into theirs, and it is in this form that we possess them.

This poetry shows in subject and in treatment very considerable range. We have a great poem, epic in character; poems partly narrative and partly descriptive; poems that may be classed as lyric or elegiac in character; a large body of verse containing a paraphrase of portions of the Bible; a collection of 'Riddles'; poems on animals, with morals; and others difficult to classify.

The regular verse-form was the alliterative, four-accent line, broken by a strongly marked cæsure into two half-lines, which were in early editions printed as short lines. The verse was occasionally extended to six accents. In the normal verse there were two alliterated words in the first half of the line, each of which received a strong accent; in the second half there was one accented word in alliteration with the alliterated words in the first half, and one other accented word not in alliteration. A great license was allowed as to the number of unaccented syllables, and as to their position in regard to the accented ones; and this lent great freedom and vigor to the verse. When well con-

structed and well read, it must have been very effective. There were of course many variations from the normal number, three, of alliterated words, as it would be impossible to find so many for every line.

Something of the quality of this verse-form may be felt in translations which aim at the same effect. Notice the result in the following from Professor Gummere's version of 'Beowulf': —

Then the warriors went, as the way was showed to them,  
Under Heorot's roof; the hero stepped,  
Hardy 'neath helm, till the hearth he neared.

In these verses it will be noted that the alliteration is complete in the first and third, and that in the second it is incomplete.

A marked feature of the Anglo-Saxon poetry is parallelism, or the repetition of an idea by means of new phrases or epithets, most frequently within the limits of a single sentence. This proceeds from the desire to emphasize attributes ascribed to the deity, or to some person or object prominent in the sentence. But while the added epithets have often a cumulative force, and are picturesque, yet it must be admitted that they sometimes do not justify their introduction. This may be best illustrated by an example. The following, in the translation of Earle, is Cædmon's first hymn, composed between 658 and 680, and the earliest piece of Anglo-Saxon poetry that we know to have had its origin in England: —

Now shall we glorify the guardian of heaven's realm,  
The Maker's might and the thought of his mind;  
The work of the Glory-Father, how He of every wonder,  
He, the Lord eternal, laid the foundation.  
He shaped erst for the sons of men  
Heaven, their roof, Holy Creator;  
The middle world, He, mankind's sovereign,  
Eternal captain, afterwards created,  
The land for men, Lord Almighty.

Many of the figurative expressions are exceedingly vigorous and poetic; some to our taste not so much so. Note the epithets in "the lank wolf," "the wan raven," "bird greedy for slaughter," "the dewy-winged eagle," "dusky-coated," "crooked-beaked," "horny-beaked," "the maid, fair-cheeked," "curly-locked," "elf-bright." To the Anglo-Saxon poet, much that we call metaphorical was scarcely more than literal statement. As the object pictured itself to his responsive imagination, he expressed it with what was to him a direct realism. His lines are filled with a profusion of metaphors of every degree of effectiveness. To him the sea was "the water-street," "the swan-path," "the strife of the waves," "the whale-path"; the ship was "the foamy-

necked floater," "the wave-farer," "the sea-wood," "the sea-horse"; the arrow was "the battle-adder"; the battle was "spear-play," "sword-play"; the prince was "the ring-giver," "the gold-friend"; the throne was "the gift-stool"; the body, "the bone-house"; the mind, "the breast-hoard."

Indeed, as it has been pointed out by many writers, the metaphor is almost the only figure of the Anglo-Saxon poetry. The more developed simile belongs to a riper and more reflective culture, and is exceedingly rare in this early native product. It has been noted that 'Beowulf,' a poem of three thousand one hundred and eighty-four lines, contains only four or five simple similes, and only one that is fully carried out. "The ship glides away likest to a bird," "The monster's eyes gleam like fire," are simple examples cited by Ten Brink, who gives also the elaborate one, "The sword-hilt melted, most like to ice, when the Father looseneth the chain of frost, and unwindeth the wave-ropes." But even this simile is almost obliterated by the crowding metaphors.

Intensity, an almost abrupt directness, a lack of explanatory detail, are more general characteristics, though in greatly varying degrees. As some critic has well said, the Anglo-Saxon poet seems to presuppose a knowledge of his subject-matter by those he addresses. Such a style is capable of great swiftness of movement, and is well suited to rapid description and narrative; but at times roughness or meagerness results.

The prevailing tone is one of sadness. In the lyric poetry, this is so decided that all the Anglo-Saxon lyrics have been called elegies. This note seems to be the echo of the struggle with an inhospitable climate, dreary with rain, ice, hail, and snow; and of the uncertainties of life, and the certainty of death. Suffering was never far off, and everything was in the hands of Fate. This is true at least of the earlier poetry, and the note is rarely absent even in the Christian lyrics. A more cheerful strain is sometimes heard, as in the 'Riddles,' but it is rather the exception; and any alleged humor is scarcely more than a suspicion. Love and sentiment, in the modern sense, are not made the subject of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and this must mean that they did not enter into the Anglo-Saxon life with the same intensity as into modern life. The absence of this beautiful motive has, to some degree, its compensation in the exceeding moral purity of the whole literature. It is doubtful whether it has its equal in this respect.

Anglo-Saxon prose displays, as a general thing, a simple, direct, and clear style. There is, of course, a considerable difference between the prose of the earlier and that of the later period, and individual writers show peculiarities. It displays throughout a marked contrast with the poetic style, in its freedom from parallelisms in thought and phrase, from inversions, archaisms, and the almost excessive wealth of metaphor and epithet. In its early stages, there is apparent perhaps a poverty of resource, a lack of flexibility; but this charge cannot be sustained against the best prose of the later period. In the trans-

lations from the Latin it shows a certain stiffness, and becomes sometimes involved, in the too conscientious effort of the translator to follow the classic original.

No attempt will be made here to notice, or even to name, all the large number of literary works of the Anglo-Saxons. It must be sufficient to examine briefly a few of the most important and characteristic productions of this really remarkable and prolific movement.

The 'Song of Widsith, the Far Traveler,' is now generally conceded to be, in part at least, the oldest existing Anglo-Saxon poem. We do not know when it assumed its present form; but it is certain that it was after the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, since it has interpolations from the Christian scribe. The poem seems to give evidence of being a growth from an original song by a wandering *scop*, or poet, who claims to have visited the Gothic king Eormanric, "the grim violator of treaties," who died in 375 or 376. But other kings are mentioned who lived in the first half of the sixth century. It is probable, then, that it was begun in the fourth century, and having been added to by successive gleemen, as it was transmitted orally, was finally completed in the earlier part of the sixth. It was then carried over to England, and there first written down in Northumbria. It possesses great interest because of its antiquity, and because of the light it throws upon the life of the professional singer in those ancient times among the Teutons. It has a long list of kings and places, partly historical, partly mythical or not identified. The poem, though narrative and descriptive, is also lyrical. We find here the strain of elegiac sadness, of regretful retrospection, so generally present in Anglo-Saxon poetry of lyric character, and usually much more pronounced than in 'Widsith.'

'Beowulf' is, in many respects, the most important poetical monument of the Anglo-Saxons. The materials of the poem are largely of Continental origin, and many different strands were woven together by the Christian and English poet who gave it form. When this occurred we do not know certainly, but there seems good reason for assuming the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century as the time, and Northumbria as the place. The single manuscript which has reached us, however, is much later, about the tenth century, and the poem there stands in the West Saxon dialect.

The poem is epic in cast and epic in proportion. Although, judged by the Homeric standard, it falls short in many respects of the complete form, yet it may without violence be called an epic. The central figure, Beowulf, a nobly conceived hero, possessing immense strength, unflinching courage, a never-swerving sense of honor, magnanimity, and generosity, the friend and champion of the weak against evil however terrible, is the element of unity in the whole poem. It is in itself a great honor to the race that they were able to conceive as their ideal a hero so superior in all that constitutes true nobility to the Greek ideal, Achilles. It is true that the poem consists of two parts, connected

by little more than the fact that they have the same hero at different times of life; that episodes are introduced that do not blend perfectly into the unity of the poem; and that there is a lack of repose and sometimes of lucidity. Yet there is a dignity and vigor, and a large consistency in the treatment of the theme, that is epic. Ten Brink says: — "The poet's intensity is not seldom imparted to the listener. . . . The portrayals of battles, although much less realistic than the Homeric descriptions, are yet at times superior to them, in so far as the demoniac rage of war elicits from the Germanic fancy a crowding affluence of vigorous scenes hastily projected in glittering lights of grim half gloom." In addition to its great poetic merit, 'Beowulf' is of the greatest importance to us on account of the many fine pictures of ancient Teutonic life it presents.

In the merest outline, the argument of 'Beowulf' is as follows: — Hrothgar, King of the Gar-Danes, has built a splendid hall, called Heorot. This is the scene of royal festivity until a monster from the fen, Grendel, breaks into it by night and devours thirty of the king's thanes. From that time the hall is desolate, for no one can cope with Grendel, and Hrothgar is in despair. Beowulf, the noble hero of the Geats, in Sweden, hears of the terrible calamity, and with fourteen companions sails across the sea to undertake the adventure. Hrothgar receives him joyfully, and after a splendid banquet gives Heorot into his charge. During the following night, Beowulf is attacked by Grendel; and after one of his companions has been slain, he tears out the arm of the monster, who escapes, mortally hurt, to his fen. On the morrow all is rejoicing; but when night falls, the monster's mother attacks Heorot, and kills Hrothgar's favorite thane. The next day, Beowulf pursues her to her den under the waters of the fen, and after a terrific combat slays her. The hero returns home to Sweden laden with gifts. This ends the main thread of the first incident. In the second incident, after an interval of fifty years, we find Beowulf an old man. He has been for many years King of the Geats. A fire-breathing dragon, the guardian of a great treasure, is devastating the land. The heroic old king, accompanied by a party of thanes, attacks the dragon. All the thanes save one are cowardly; but the old hero, with the aid of the faithful one, slays the dragon, not, however, till he is fatally injured. Then follow his death and picturesque burial.

In this sketch, stirring episodes, graphic descriptions, and fine effects are all sacrificed. The poem itself is a noble one and the English people may well be proud of preserving in it the first epic production of the Teutonic race.

The 'Fight at Finnsburg' is a fine fragment of epic cast. The Finn saga is at least as old as the Beowulf poem, since the gleeman at Hrothgar's banquet makes it his theme. From the fragment and the gleeman's song we perceive that the situation here is much more complex than is usual in Anglo-Saxon poems, and involves a tragic conflict of passion. Hildeburh's brother is slain through the treachery of her husband, Finn; her son also falls; in a

subsequent counterplot, her husband is slain and she is carried back to Denmark. Besides the extraordinary vigor of the narrative, the theme has special interest in that a woman is really the central figure, though not treated as a heroine.

A favorite theme in the older lyric poems is the complaint of some wandering *scop*, driven from his home by the exigencies of those perilous times. Either the singer has been bereft of his patron by death, or he has been supplanted in his favor by some successful rival; and he passes in sorrowful review his former happiness, and contrasts it with his present misery. The oldest of these lyrics are of pagan origin, though usually with Christian additions.

In 'The Wanderer,' an unknown poet pictures the exile who has fled across the sea from his home. He is utterly lonely. He must lock his sorrow in his heart. In his dream he embraces and kisses his lord, and lays his head upon his knee, as of old. He awakes, and sees nothing but the gray sea, the snow, and hail, and the birds dipping their wings in the waves. And so he reflects: the world is full of care; we are all in the hands of Fate. Then comes the Christian sentiment: happy is he who seeks comfort with his Father in heaven, with whom alone all things are enduring.

Another fine poem of this class, somewhat similar to 'The Wanderer,' is 'The Seafarer.' It is, however, distinct in detail and treatment, and has its own peculiar beauty. In 'The Fortunes of Men,' the poet treats the uncertainty of all things earthly, from the point of view of the parent forecasting the ill and the good the future may bring to his sons. 'Deor's Lament' possesses a genuine lyrical quality of high order. The singer has been displaced by a rival, and finds consolation in his grief from reciting the woes that others have endured, and reflects in each instance, "That was got over, and so this may be." Other poems on other subjects might be noticed here; as 'The Husband's Message,' where the love of husband for wife is the theme, and 'The Ruin,' which contains reflections suggested by a ruined city.

It is a remarkable fact that only two of these poets are known to us by name, Cædmon and Cynewulf. We find the story of the inspiration, work, and death of Cædmon, the earlier of these, told in the pages of Bede. The date of his birth is not given, but his death fell around 680. He was a Northumbrian, and was connected in a lay capacity with the great monastery of Whitby. He was uneducated, and not endowed in his earlier life with the gift of song. One night, after he had fled in mortification from a feast where all were required to improvise and sing, he received, as he slept, the divine inspiration. The next day he made known his new gift to the authorities of the monastery. After he had triumphantly made good his claims, he was admitted to holy orders, and began his work of paraphrasing into noble verse portions of the Scriptures that were read to him. Of the body of poetry that comes down to us under his name, we cannot be sure that any is his, unless we except the short passage given here. It is certainly the work of different poets,

and varies in merit. The evidence seems conclusive that he was a poet of high order, that his influence was very great, and that many others wrote in his manner. The actors and the scenery of the Cædmonian poetry are entirely Anglo-Saxon, only the names and the outline of the narrative being Biblical; and the spirit of battle that breathes in some passages is the same that we find in the heathen epic.

Cynewulf was most probably a Northumbrian, though this is sometimes questioned. The dates of his birth and death are unknown. It seems established, however, that his work belongs to the eighth century. A great deal of controversy has arisen over a number of poems that have been ascribed to him and denied to him with equal persistency. But we stand upon sure ground in regard to four poems, the 'Christ,' the 'Fates of the Apostles,' 'Juliana,' and 'Elene'; for he has signed them in runes. The 'Elene,' generally considered the finest of his poems, is the story of the miraculous finding of the holy cross by St. Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine. The poet has lent great charm to the tradition in his treatment. The poem sounds a triumphant note throughout, till we reach the epilogue, where the poet speaks in his own person and in a sadder tone.

The quality of Cynewulf's poetry is unequal; but when he is at his best, he is a great poet and a great artist. His personality appears in direct subjective utterance more plainly than does that of any other Anglo-Saxon poet.

While we must pass over many fine Anglo-Saxon poems without mention, there are two that must receive some notice. 'Judith' is an epic based upon the book of Judith in the Apocrypha. Only about one-fourth of it has survived. The author is still unknown, in spite of many intelligent efforts to determine to whom the honor belongs. The dates assigned to it vary from the seventh to the tenth century; here, too, uncertainty prevails: but we are at least sure that it is one of the best of the Anglo-Saxon poems. It has been said that this work shows a more definite plan and more conscious art than any other Anglo-Saxon poem. Brooke finds it sometimes conventional in the form of expression, and denies it the highest rank for that reason. But he does not seem to sustain the charge. The two principal characters, the dauntless Judith and the brutal Holofernes, stand out with remarkable distinctness, and a fine dramatic quality has been noted by several critics. The epithets and metaphors, the description of the drunken debauch, and the swift, powerful narrative of the battle and the rout of the Assyrians, are in the best Anglo-Saxon epic strain. The poem is distinctly Christian; for the Hebrew heroine, with a naïve anachronism, prays thus: "God of Creation, Spirit of Consolation, Son of the Almighty, I pray for Thy mercy to me, greatly in need of it, Glory of the Trinity."

'The Battle of Maldon' is a ballad, containing an account of a fight between the Northmen and the East Saxons under the Aldorman, Byrhtnoth. The incident is mentioned in one MS. of the 'Chronicle' under the date of

991; in another, under the date of 993. The poem is exceedingly graphic. The poet seems filled with intense feeling, and may have been a spectator, or may indeed have taken part in the struggle. He tells how the brave old Aldorman disdains to use the advantage of his position, which bade fair to give him victory. Like a boy, he cannot take a dare, but fatuously allows the enemy to begin the battle upon an equal footing with his own men. He pays for his noble folly with his life and the defeat of his army. The devotion of the Aldorman's hearth-companions, who refuse to survive their lord, and with brave words meet their death, is finely described. But not all are true; some, who have been especially favored, ignobly flee. These are treated with the racial contempt for cowards. The poem has survived in fragmentary form, and the name of the poet is not known.

As distinguished from all poetical remains of such literature, the surviving prose of the Anglo-Saxons, though extensive, and of the greatest interest and value, is less varied in subject and manner than their poetry. It admits of brief treatment. The earliest known specimens of Anglo-Saxon prose writing have been already mentioned. These do not constitute the beginning of a literature, yet, with the rest of the extensive collection of Anglo-Saxon laws that has survived, they are of the greatest importance to students. Earle quotes Dr. Reinhold Schmid as saying, "No other Germanic nation has bequeathed to us out of its earliest experience so rich a treasure of original legal documents as the Anglo-Saxon nation has."

To the West Saxons belongs nearly the whole of Anglo-Saxon prose. Whatever may have existed in Northumbria perished in the inroads of the Northmen, except such parts as may have been incorporated in West Saxon writings. It will be remembered, however, that the great Northumbrian prose writers had held to the Latin as their medium. The West Saxon prose literature may be said to begin in Alfred's reign.

The most important production that we have to consider is the famous Anglo-Saxon 'Chronicle.' It covers with more or less completeness the period from 449 to 1154. This was supplemented by fanciful genealogies leading back to Woden, or even to Adam. It is not known when the practice of jotting down in the native speech notices of contemporary events began, but probably in very early times. It is believed, however, that no intelligent effort to collect and present them with order and system was made until the middle of the ninth century. In the oldest of the seven MSS. in which it has come down to us, we have the 'Chronicle' to 891, as it was written down in Alfred's time and probably under his supervision.

The meagerness of the earliest entries and the crudeness of the language, together with occasional picturesque force, indicate that many of them were drawn from current song or tradition. The style and fullness of the entries differ greatly throughout, as might be expected, since the 'Chronicle' is the work of so many hands. From mere bare notices they vary to strong, full nar-

rative and description. Indeed, the 'Chronicle' contains some of the most effective prose produced by the Anglo-Saxons; and in one instance, under the date 937, the annalist describes the battle of Brunanburh in a poem of considerable merit. But we know the name of no single contributor.

This 'Chronicle' is the oldest and most important work of the kind produced outside of the classical languages in Europe. It is meager in places, and its entire trustworthiness has been questioned. But it and Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History,' supplemented by other Anglo-Saxon writings, constitute the basis of early English history; and this fact alone entitles it to the highest rank in importance among ancient documents.

A large body of Anglo-Saxon prose, nearly all of it translation or adaptation of Latin works, has come down to us under the name of King Alfred. A peculiar interest attaches to these works. They belong to a period when the history of England depended more than at any other time upon the ability and devotion of one man; and that man, the most heroic and the greatest of English kings, was himself the author of them.

When Alfred became king, in 871, his throne seemed tottering to its fall. Practically all the rest of England was at the feet of the ruthless Northmen, and soon Alfred himself was little better than a fugitive. But by his military skill, which was successful if not brilliant, and by his never-wavering devotion and English persistency, he at last freed the southern part of the island from his merciless and treacherous enemies, and laid the firm foundation of West Saxon supremacy. If Alfred had failed in any respect to be the great king that he was, English history would have been changed for all time.

Although Alfred had saved his kingdom, yet it was a kingdom almost in ruins. The hopeful advance of culture had been entirely arrested. The great centers of learning had been utterly destroyed in the north, and little remained intact in the south. And even worse than this was the demoralization of all classes, and an indisposition to renewed effort. There was, moreover, a great scarcity of books.

Alfred showed himself as great in peace as in war, and at once set to work to meet all those difficulties. To supply the books that were so urgently needed, he found time in the midst of his perplexing cares to translate from the Latin into the native speech such works as he thought would supply the most pressing want. This was the more necessary from the prevailing ignorance of Latin. It is likely that portions of the works that go under his name were produced under his supervision by carefully selected co-workers. But it is certain that in a large part of them we may see the work of the great Alfred's own hand.

He has used his own judgment in these translations, omitting whatever he did not think would be immediately helpful to his people, and making such additions as he thought might be of advantage. Just these additions have the greatest interest for us. He translated, for instance, Orosius' 'History'; a

work in itself of inferior worth, but as an attempt at a universal history from the Christian point of view, he thought it best suited to the needs of his people. The Anglo-Saxon version contains most interesting additions of original matter by Alfred. They consist of accounts of the voyages of Ohthere, a Norwegian, who was the first, so far as we know, to sail around the North Cape and into the White Sea, and of Wulfstan, who explored parts of the coast of the Baltic. These narratives give us our first definite information about the lands and people of these regions, and appear to have been taken down by the king directly as related by the explorers. Alfred added to this 'History' also a description of Central Europe, which Morley calls "the only authentic record of the Germanic nations written by a contemporary so early as the ninth century."

In Gregory's 'Pastoral Care' we have Alfred's closest translation. It is a presentation of "the ideal Christian pastor" (Ten Brink), and was intended for the benefit of the lax Anglo-Saxon priests. Perhaps the work that appealed most strongly to Alfred himself was Boëthius' 'Consolations of Philosophy'; and in his full translation and adaptation of this book we see the hand and the heart of the good king. We shall mention one other work of Alfred's, his translation of the already frequently mentioned 'Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum' of the Venerable Bede. This great work Alfred, with good reason, considered to be of the greatest possible value to his people; and the king has given it additional value for us.

Alfred was not a great scholar. The wonder is that, in the troublous times of his youth, he had learned even the rudiments. The language in his translations, however, though not infrequently affected for the worse by the Latin idiom of the original, is in the main free from ornament of any kind, simple and direct, and reflects in its sincerity the noble character of the great king.

The two names that follow Alfred's in the history of English prose are those of Ælfric, who became Abbot of Eynsham, near Oxford, and died not long after 1020, and Wulfstan, Bishop of London, and later of both York and Worcester, who died in 1023. Ælfric, following Alfred's example, wrote not from personal ambition, but for the betterment of his countrymen. His style is eminently lucid, fluent, forcible, and of graceful finish. It is markedly alliterative and rhythmical. Earle observes of it: — "The English of these Homilies is splendid; indeed, we may confidently say that here English appears fully qualified to be the medium of the highest learning." This is high praise, and should be well considered by those disposed to regard the Anglo-Saxon as a rude tongue, incapable of great development in itself, and only enabled by the Norman infusion to give expression to a deep and broad culture. Ælfric's works in Anglo-Saxon — for he wrote also in Latin — were very numerous, embracing two series of homilies, theological writings of many kinds, translations of portions of the Bible, an English (Anglo-Saxon) grammar, adapted from a Latin work, a Latin dictionary, and many other things

of great use in their day and of great interest in ours. Wulfstan, also a conscious stylist, is known by a collection of 'Homilies,' chief of which is his 'Sermon to the English' denouncing the evils of the day.

It must be admitted that the last years of the Anglo-Saxon nationality before the coming of the Normans show a decline in literary productiveness of a high order. The causes of this are to be found chiefly in the political and ecclesiastical history of the time. Wars with the Northmen, internal dissensions, religious controversies, the greater cultivation of Latin by the priesthood, all contributed to it. But hopeful signs of a new revival were not wanting. The language had steadily developed with the enlightenment of the people, and was fast becoming fit to meet any demands that might be made upon it, when the great catastrophe of the Norman Conquest came, and with it practically the end of the historical and distinctive Anglo-Saxon literature.

ROBERT SHARP

#### FROM 'BEOWULF'

[The Spear-Danes intrust the dead body of King Scyld to the sea, in a splendidly adorned ship. He had come to them mysteriously, alone in a ship, when an infant.]

**A**T the hour that was fated  
 Scyld then departed to the All-Father's keeping  
 Warlike to wend him; away then they bare him  
 To the flood of the current, his fond-loving comrades,  
 As himself he had bidden, while the friend of the Scyldings  
 Word-sway wielded, and the well-lovèd land prince  
 Long did rule them. The ring-stemmèd vessel,  
 Bark of the atheling, lay there at anchor,  
 Icy in glimmer and eager for sailing;  
 The beloved leader laid they down there,  
 Giver of rings, on the breast of the vessel,  
 The famed by the mainmast. A many of jewels,  
 Of fretted embossings, from far-lands brought over,  
 Was placed near at hand then; and heard I not ever  
 That a folk ever furnished a float more superbly  
 With weapons of warfare, weeds for the battle,  
 Bills and burnies; on his bosom sparkled  
 Many a jewel that with him must travel  
 On the flush of the flood afar on the current.

And favors no fewer they furnished him soothly,  
 Excellent folk-gems, than others had given him  
 Lone on the main, the merest of infants:  
 And a gold-fashioned standard they stretched under heaven  
 High o'er his head, let the holm-currents bear him,  
 Seaward consigned him: sad was their spirit,  
 Their mood very mournful. Men are not able  
 Soothly to tell us, they in halls who reside,  
 Heroes under heaven, to what haven he hied.

[King Hrothgar describes the haunted mere.]

They guard the wolf-coverts,  
 Lands inaccessible, wind-beaten nesses,  
 Fearfulest fen-deeps, where a flood from the mountains  
 'Neath mists of the nesses netherward rattles,  
 The stream under earth: not far is it henceward  
 Measured by mile-lengths the mere-water standeth,  
 Which forests hang over, with frost-whiting covered,  
 A firm-rooted forest, the floods overshadow.  
 There ever at night one an ill-meaning portent,  
 A fire-flood may see; 'mong children of men  
 None liveth so wise that wot of the bottom;  
 Though harassed by hounds the heath-stepper seek for,  
 Fly to the forest, firm-antlered he-deer,  
 Spurred from afar, his spirit he yieldeth,  
 His life on the shore, ere in he will venture  
 To cover his head. Uncanny the place is:  
 Thence upward ascendeth the surging of waters,  
 Wan to the welkin, when the wind is stirring  
 The weather unpleasing, till the air groweth gloomy,  
 Then the heavens lower.

[Beowulf has plunged into the water of the mere in pursuit of Grendel's mother, and is a whole day in reaching the bottom. He is seized by the monster and carried to her cavern, where the combat ensues.]

The earl then discovered he was down in some cavern  
 Where no water whatever anywise harmed him,  
 And the clutch of the current could come not anear him  
 Since the roofed-hall prevented; brightness a-gleaming,  
 Firelight he saw, flashing resplendent.  
 The good one saw then the sea-bottom's monster,

The mighty mere-woman: he made a great onset  
With weapon-of-battle; his hand not desisted  
From striking; the war-blade struck on her head then  
A battle-song greedy. The stranger perceived then  
The sword would not bite, her life would not injure,  
But the falchion failed the folk-prince when straitened:  
Erst had it often onsets encountered,  
Oft cloven the helmet, the fated one's armor;  
'Twas the first time that ever the excellent jewel  
Had failed of its fame. Firm-mooded after,  
Not heedless of valor, but mindful of glory  
Was Higelac's kinsman; the hero-chief angry  
Cast then his carved-sword covered with jewels  
That it lay on the earth, hard and steel-pointed;  
He hoped in his strength, his hand-grapple sturdy.  
So any must act whenever he thinketh  
To gain him in battle glory unending,  
And is reckless of living. The lord of the War-Geats  
(He shrank not from battle) seized by the shoulder  
The mother of Grendel; then mighty in struggle  
Swung he his enemy, since his anger was kindled,  
That she fell to the floor. With furious grapple  
She gave him requital early thereafter,  
And stretched out to grab him; the strongest of warriors  
Faint-mooded stumbled, till he fell in his traces,  
Foot-going champion. Then she sat on the hall-guest  
And wielded her war-knife wide-bladed, flashing,  
For her son would take vengeance, her one only bairn.  
His breast-armor woven bode on his shoulder;  
It guarded his life, the entrance defended  
'Gainst sword-point and edges. Ecgtheow's son there  
Had fatally journeyed, champion of Geatmen,  
In the arms of the ocean, had the armor not given,  
Close-woven corselet, comfort and succor,  
And had God Most Holy not awarded the victory,  
All-knowing lord; easily did heaven's  
Ruler most righteous arrange it with justice;  
Uprose he erect ready for battle.  
Then he saw 'mid the war-gems a weapon of victory,  
An ancient giant-sword, of edges a-doughty,  
Glory of warriors: of weapons 'twas choicest,  
Only 'twas larger than any man else was  
Able to bear to the battle-encounter,

The good and splendid work of the giants.  
 He grasped then the sword-hilt, knight of the Scyldings,  
 Bold and battle-grim, brandished his ring-sword.  
 Hopeless of living, hotly he smote her,  
 That the fiend-woman's neck firmly it grappled,  
 Broke through her bone-joints, the bill fully pierced her  
 Fate-cursed body, she fell to the ground then:  
 The hand-sword was bloody, the hero exulted.

[Fifty years have elapsed. The aged Beowulf has died from the injuries received in his struggle with the Fire Drake. His body is burned, and a barrow erected.]

A folk of the Geatmen got him then ready  
 A pile on the earth strong for the burning,  
 Behung with helmets, hero-knight's targets,  
 And bright-shining burnies, as he begged they should have them;  
 Then wailing war-heroes their world-famous chieftain,  
 Their liege-lord beloved, laid in the middle.  
 Soldiers began then to make on the barrow  
 The largest of dead fires: dark o'er the vapor  
 The smoke cloud ascended; the sad-roaring fire,  
 Mingled with weeping (the wind-roar subsided)  
 Till the building of bone it had broken to pieces,  
 Hot in the heart. Heavy in spirit  
 They mood-sad lamented the men-leader's ruin. . . .  
 The men of the Weders made accordingly  
 A hill on the height, high and extensive,  
 Of sea-going sailors to be seen from a distance,  
 And the brave one's beacon built where the fire was,  
 In ten days' space, with a wall surrounded it,  
 As wisest of world-folk could most worthily plan it.  
 They placed in the barrow rings and jewels,  
 All such ornaments as erst in the treasure  
 War-mooded men had won in possession:  
 The earnings of earlmen to earth they intrusted,  
 The gold to the dust, where yet it remaineth  
 As useless to mortals as in foregoing eras.  
 'Round the dead-mound rode then the doughty-in-battle,  
 Bairns of all twelve of the chiefs of the people,  
 More would they mourn, lament for their ruler,  
 Speak in measure, mention him with pleasure;  
 Weighed his worth, and his warlike achievements

Mightily commended, as 'tis meet one praise his  
 Liege lord in words and love him in spirit,  
 When forth from his body he fares to destruction.  
 So lamented mourning the men of the Geats,  
 Fond loving vassals, the fall of their lord,  
 Said he was gentlest of kings under heaven,  
 Mildest of men and most philanthropic,  
 Friendliest to folk-troops and fondest of honor.

Translated by John Leslie Hall

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### DEOR'S LAMENT

W AYLAND often wandered in exile,  
 doughty earl, ills endur'd,  
 had for comrades care and longing,  
 winter-cold wandering; woe oft found  
 since Nithhad brought such need upon him —  
 laming wound on a lordlier man.

That pass'd over — and this may, too!

In Beadohild's breast, her brother's death  
 wrought no such ill as her own disgrace,  
 when she had openly understood  
 her maidhood vanished; she might no wise  
 think how the case could thrive at all.

That pass'd over — and this may, too!

We have heard enough of Hild's disgrace;  
 heroes of Geat were homeless made,  
 and sorrow stole their sleep away.

That pass'd over — and this may, too!

Theodoric held for thirty winters  
 Mæring's burg, as many have known.

That pass'd over — and this may, too!

We have also heard of Ermanric's  
 wolfish mind; wide was his sway

o'er the Gothic race — a ruler grim.  
 Sat many a man in misery bound,  
 waited but woe, and wish'd amain  
 that ruin might fall on the royal house.  
 That pass'd over — and this may, too!


Sitteth one sighing sunder'd from happiness;  
 all's dark within him; he deems forsooth  
 that his share of evils shall endless be.  
 Let such bethink him that thro' this world  
 mighty God sends many changes:  
 to earls a plenty honor he shows.  
 ease and bliss; to others, sorrow.

Now I will say of myself, and how  
 I was singer once to the sons of Heoden,  
 dear to my master, and Deor was my name.  
 Long were the winters my lord was kind,  
 happy my lot — till Heorrenda now  
 by grace of singing has gained the land  
 which the "haven of heroes" erewhile gave me.  
 That pass'd over — and this may, too!

Translated by F. B. Gummere

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#### FROM 'THE WANDERER'

FTTIMES the Wanderer waiteth God's mercy,  
 Sad and disconsolate though he may be,  
 Far o'er the watery track must he travel,  
 Long must he row o'er the rime-crust'd sea —  
 Plod his lone exile-path — Fate is severe.  
 Mindful of slaughter, his kinsman friends' death,  
 Mindful of hardships, the wanderer saith: —  
 Oft must I lonely, when dawn doth appear,  
 Wail o'er my sorrow — since living is none  
 Whom I may whisper my heart's undertone,  
 Know I full well that in man it is noble  
 Fast in his bosom his sorrow to bind.

Weary at heart, yet his Fate is unyielding —  
Help cometh not to his suffering mind.  
Therefore do those who are thirsting for glory  
Bind in their bosom each pain's biting smart.  
Thus must I often, afar from my kinsmen,  
Fasten in fetters my home-banished heart.  
Now since the day when my dear prince departed  
Wrapped in the gloom of his dark earthen grave,  
I, a poor exile, have wandered in winter  
Over the flood of the foam-frozen wave,  
Seeking, sad-hearted, some giver of treasure,  
Some one to cherish me friendless — some chief  
Able to guide me with wisdom of counsel,  
Willing to greet me and comfort my grief.  
He who hath tried it, and he alone, knoweth  
How harsh a comrade is comfortless Care  
Unto the man who hath no dear protector,  
Gold wrought with fingers nor treasures so fair.  
Chill is his heart as he roameth in exile —  
Thinketh of banquets his boyhood saw spread;  
Friends and companions partook of his pleasures —  
Knoweth he well that all friendless and lordless  
Sorrow awaits him a long bitter while; —  
Yet, when the spirits of Sorrow and Slumber  
Fasten with fetters the orphaned exile,  
Seemeth him then that he seeth in spirit,  
Meeteth and greeteth his master once more,  
Layeth his head on his lord's loving bosom,  
Just as he did in the dear days of yore.  
But he awaketh, forsaken and friendless,  
Seeth before him the black billows rise,  
Seabirds are bathing and spreading their feathers,  
Hailsnow and hoar-frost are hiding the skies.  
Then in his heart the more heavily wounded,  
Longeth full sore for his loved one, his own,  
Sad is the mind that remembereth kinsmen,  
Greeting with gladness the days that are gone.  
Seemeth him then on the waves of the ocean  
Comrades are swimming — well-nigh within reach —  
Yet from the spiritless lips of the swimmers  
Cometh familiar no welcoming speech.  
So is his sorrow renewed and made sharper  
When the sad exile so often must send

Thoughts of his suffering spirit to wander  
 Wide o'er the waves where the rough billows blend.  
 So, lest the thought of my mind should be clouded,  
 Close must I prison my sadness of heart,  
 When I remember my bold comrade-kinsmen,  
 How from the mede-hall I saw them depart.  
 Thus is the earth with its splendor departing —  
 Day after day it is passing away,  
 Nor may a mortal have much of true wisdom  
 Till his world-life numbers many a day.  
 He who is wise, then, must learn to be patient —  
 Not too hot-hearted, too hasty of speech,  
 Neither too weak nor too bold in the battle,  
 Fearful, nor joyous, nor greedy to reach,  
 Neither too ready to boast till he knoweth —  
 Man must abide, when he vaunted his pride,  
 Till strong of mind he hath surely determined  
 Whether his purpose can be turned aside.  
 Surely the wise man may see like the desert  
 How the whole wealth of the world lieth waste,  
 How through the earth the lone walls are still standing,  
 Blown by the wind and despoiled and defaced.  
 Covered with frost, the proud dwellings are ruined,  
 Crumbled the wine-halls — the king lieth low,  
 Robbed of his pride — and his troop have all fallen  
 Proud by the wall — some, the spoil of the foe,  
 War took away — and some the fierce sea-fowl  
 Over the ocean — and some the wolf gray  
 Tore after death — and yet others the hero  
 Sad-faced has laid in earth-caverns away.  
 Thus at his will the eternal Creator  
 Famished the fields of the earth's ample fold —  
 Until her dwellers abandoned their feast-boards,  
 Void stood the work of the giants of old.  
 One who was viewing full wisely this wall-place,  
 Pondering deeply his dark, dreary life,  
 Spake then as follows, his past thus reviewing,  
 Years full of slaughter and struggle and strife: —  
 "Whither, alas, have my horses been carried?  
 Whither, alas, are my kinspeople gone?  
 Where is my giver of treasure and feasting?  
 Where are the joys of the hall I have known?  
 Ah, the bright cup — and the corseleted warrior —

Ah, the bright joy of a king's happy lot!  
 How the glad time has forever departed,  
 Swallowed in darkness, as though it were not!  
 Standeth, instead of the troop of young warriors,  
 Stained with the bodies of dragons, a wall —  
 The men were cut down in their pride by the spear points —  
 Blood-greedy weapons — but noble their fall.  
 Earth is enwrapped in the lowering tempest,  
 Fierce on the stone-cliff the storm rushes forth,  
 Cold winter-terror, the night shade is dark'ning,  
 Hail-storms are laden with death from the north.  
 All full of hardships is earthly existence —  
 Here the decrees of the Fates have their sway —  
 Fleeting is treasure and fleeting is friendship —  
 Here man is transient, here friends pass away.  
 Earth's widely stretching, extensive domain,  
 Desolate all — empty, idle, and vain."

Translated by W. R. Sims

### THE SEAFARER

**S**OOTH the song that I of myself can sing,  
 Telling of my travels; how in troublous days,  
 Hours of hardship oft I've borne!  
 With a bitter breast-care I have been abiding;  
 Many seats of sorrow in my ship have known!  
 Frightful was the whirl of waves, when it was my part  
 Narrow watch at night to keep, on my Vessel's prow  
 When it rushed the rocks along. By the rigid cold  
 Fast my feet were pinched, fettered by the frost,  
 By the chains of cold. Care was sighing then  
 Hot my heart around; hunger rent to shreds  
 Courage in me, sea-wearied! This the man knows not,  
 He to whom it happens, happiest on earth,  
 How I, carked with care, in the ice-cold sea,  
 Overwent the winter on my wander-ways,  
 All forlorn of happiness, all bereft of loving kinsmen,  
 Hung about with icicles; flew the hail in showers.  
 Nothing heard I there save the howling of the sea,  
 And the ice-chilled billow, 'whiles the crying of the swan.

All the glee I got me was the gannet's scream,  
 And the swoughing of the seal, 'stead of mirth of men;  
 'Steard of the mead-drinking, moaning of the sea-mew.  
 There the storms smote on the crags, there the swallow of the sea  
 Answered to them, icy-plumed; and that answer oft the earn —  
 Wet his wings were — barked aloud.

None of all my kinsmen  
 Could this sorrow-laden soul stir to any joy.  
 Little then does he believe who life's pleasure owns,  
 While he tarries in the towns, and but trifling ills,  
 Proud and insolent with wine — how outwearied I  
 Often must outstay on the ocean path!  
 Somber grew the shade of night, and it snowed from northward,  
 Frost the field enchained, fell the hail on earth,  
 Coldest of all grains.

Wherefore now then crash together  
 Thoughts my soul within that I should myself adventure  
 The high streamings of the sea, and the sport of the salt waves!  
 For a passion of the mind every moment pricks me on  
 All my life to set a faring; so that far from hence,  
 I may seek the shore of the strange outlanders.  
 Yes, so haughty of his heart is no hero on the earth,  
 Nor so good in all his giving, nor so generous in youth,  
 Nor so daring in his deed, nor so dear unto his lord,  
 That he has not always yearning unto his seafaring,  
 To whatever work his Lord may have will to make for him.  
 For the harp he has no heart, nor for having of the rings,  
 Nor in woman is his weal, in the world he's no delight,  
 Nor in anything whatever save the tossing o'er the waves!  
 Oh, forever he has longing who is urged towards the sea.  
 Trees rebloom with blossoms, burghs are fair again,  
 Winsome are the wide plains, and the world is gay —  
 All doth only challenge the impassioned heart  
 Of his courage to the voyage, whosoever thus bethinks him,  
 O'er the ocean billows, far away to go.  
 Every cuckoo calls a warning, with his chant of sorrow!  
 Sings the summer's watchman, sorrow is he boding,  
 Bitter in the bosom's hoard. This the brave man wots not of,  
 Not the warrior rich in welfare — what the wanderer endures,  
 Who his paths of banishment, widest places on the sea.  
 For behold, my thought hovers now above my heart;  
 O'er the surging flood of sea now my spirit flies,  
 O'er the homeland of the whale — hovers then afar

O'er the foldings of the earth! Now again it flies to me  
 Full of yearning, greedy! Yells that lonely flier;  
 Whets upon the Whale-way irresistibly my heart,  
 O'er the storming of the seas!

Translated by Stopford Brooke

### THE FORTUNES OF MEN

**F**ULL often it falls out, by fortune from God,  
 That a man and a maiden may marry in this world,  
 Find cheer in the child whom they cherish and care for,  
 Tenderly tend it, until the time comes,  
 Beyond the first years, when the young limbs increasing  
 Grown firm with life's fullness, are formed for their work.  
 Fond father and mother so guide it and feed it,  
 Give gifts to it, clothe it: God only can know  
 What lot to its latter days life has to bring.  
 To some that make music in life's morning hour  
 Pining days are appointed of plaint at the close.  
 One the wild wolf shall eat, hoary hunter of wastes:  
 His mother shall mourn the small strength of a man.  
 One shall sharp hunger slay; one shall the storm beat down;  
 One be destroyed by darts, one die in war.  
 One shall live losing the light of his eyes,  
 Feel blindly with fingers; and one, lame of foot,  
 With sinew-wound wearily wasteth away,  
 Musing and mourning, with death in his mind.  
 One, failing feathers, shall fall from the height  
 Of the tall forest tree; yet he trips as though flying,  
 Plays proudly in air till he reaches the point  
 Where the woodgrowth is weak; life then whirls in his brain,  
 Bereft of his reason he sinks to the root,  
 Falls flat on the ground, his life fleeting away.  
 Afoot on the far-ways, his food in his hand,  
 One shall go grieving, and great be his need,  
 Press dew on the paths of the perilous lands  
 Where the stranger may strike, where live none to sustain.  
 All shun the desolate for being sad.  
 One the great gallows shall have in its grasp,  
 Stained in dark agony, till the soul's stay,

The bone-house, is bloodily all broken up;  
 When the harsh raven hacks eyes from the head,  
 The sallow-coated, slits the soulless man.  
 Nor can he shield from shame, scare with his hands,  
 Off from their eager feast prowlers of air.  
 Lost is his life to him, left is no breath,  
 Bleached on the gallows-beam bides he his doom;  
 Cold death-mists close round him called the Accursed.

One shall die by the dagger, in wrath, drenched with ale,  
 Wild through wine, on the mead bench, too swift with his words;  
 Through the hand that brings beer, through the gay boon companion,  
 His mouth has no measure, his mood no restraint;  
 Too lightly his life shall the wretched one lose,  
 Undergo the great ill, be left empty of joy.  
 When they speak of him slain by the sweetness of mead,  
 His comrades shall call him one killed by himself.

Some have good hap, and some hard days of toil;  
 Some glad glow of youth, and some glory in war,  
 Strength in the strife; some sling the stone, some shoot.

One shall handle the harp, at the feet of his hero  
 Sit and win wealth from the will of his Lord;  
 Still quickly contriving the throb of the cords,  
 The nail nimbly makes music, awakes a glad noise,  
 While the heart of the harper throbs, hurried by zeal.

Translated by Henry Morley

#### FROM 'JUDITH'

[The Assyrian officers, obeying the commands of Holofernes, come to the carouse.]

THEY then at the feast proceeded to sit,  
 The proud to the wine-drinking, all his comrades-in-ill,  
 Bold mailed-warriors. There were lofty beakers  
 Oft borne along the benches, also were cups and flagons  
 Full to the hall-sitters borne. The fated partook of them,  
 Brave warriors-with-shields, though the mighty weened not of it,  
 Awful lord of earls. Then was Holofernes,

Gold-friend of men, full of wine-joy:  
He laughed and clamored, shouted and dinned,  
That children of men from afar might hear  
How the strong-minded both stormed and yelled,  
Moody and mead-drunken, often admonished  
The sitters-on-benches to bear themselves well.  
Thus did the hateful one during all day  
His liege-men loyal keep plying with wine,  
Stout-hearted giver of treasure, until they lay in a swoon.

[Holofernes has been slain by Judith. The Hebrews, encouraged by her, surprise the drunken and sleeping Assyrians.]

Then the band of the braves was quickly prepared,  
Of the bold for battle; stepped out the valiant  
Men and comrades, bore their banners,  
Went forth to fight straight on their way  
The heroes 'neath helmets from the holy city  
At the dawn itself; shields made a din,  
Loudly resounded. Thereat laughed the lank  
Wolf in the wood, and the raven wan,  
Fowl greedy for slaughter: both of them knew  
That for them the warriors thought to provide  
Their fill on the fated; and flew on their track  
The dewy-winged eagle eager for prey,  
The dusky-coated sang his war-song,  
The crooked-beaked. Stepped forth the warriors,  
The heroes for battle with boards protected,  
With hollow shields, who awhile before  
The foreign-folk's reproach endured,  
The heathens' scorn; fiercely was that  
At the ash-spear's play to them all repaid,  
All the Assyrians, after the Hebrews  
Under their banners had boldly advanced  
To the army-camps. They bravely then  
Forthright let fly showers of arrows,  
Of battle-adders, out from the horn-bows,  
Of strongly-made shafts; stormed they aloud,  
The cruel warriors, sent forth their spears  
Among the brave; the heroes were angry,  
The dwellers-in-land, with the loathed race;  
The stern-minded stepped, the stout-in-heart,  
Rudely awakened their ancient foes  
Weary from mead; with hands drew forth

The men from the sheaths the brightly-marked swords  
 Most choice in their edges, eagerly struck  
 Of the host of Assyrians the battle-warriors,  
 The hostile-minded; not one they spared  
 Of the army-folk, nor low nor high  
 Of living men, whom they might subdue.

Translated by Garnett

By consent of Ginn & Co.

### THE FIGHT AT MALDON

[The Anglo-Saxons under Byrhtnoth are drawn up on one side of Panta stream, the Northmen on the other. The herald of the Northmen demands tribute. Byrhtnoth replies.]

**T**HEN stood on the stathe, stoutly did call,  
 The wikings' herald, with words he spake,  
 Who boastfully bore from the brine-farers  
 An errand to th' earl, where he stood on the shore: —  
 "To thee me did send the seamen snell,  
 Bade to thee say, thou must send to them quickly  
 Bracelets for safety; and 'tis better for you  
 That ye this spear-rush with tribute buy off  
 Than we in so fierce a fight engage.  
 We need not each spill, if ye speed to this:  
 We will for the pay a peace confirm.  
 If thou that redest, who art highest in rank,  
 If thou to the seamen at their own pleasure  
 Money for peace, and take peace from us,  
 We will with the treasure betake us to ship,  
 Fare on the flood, and peace with you confirm."  
 Byrhtnoth replied, his buckler uplifted,  
 Waved his slim spear, with words he spake,  
 Angry and firm gave answer to him: —  
 "Hear'st thou, seafarer, what saith this folk?  
 They will for tribute spear-shafts you pay,  
 Poisonous points and trusty swords,  
 Those weapons that you in battle avail not.  
 Herald of seamen, hark back again,  
 Say to thy people much sadder words: —

Here stands not unknown an earl with his band,  
Who will defend this fatherland,  
Æthelred's home, mine own liege lord's,  
His folk and field; ye're fated to fall,  
Ye heathen, in battle. Too base it me seems  
That ye with our scats to ship may go  
Unfought against, so far ye now hither  
Into our country have come within;  
Ye shall not so gently treasure obtain;  
Shall spear and sword sooner beseem us,  
Grim battle-play, ere tribute we give."

[The Northmen, unable to force a passage, ask to be allowed to cross and fight it out on an equal footing. Byrhtnoth allows this.]

"Now room is allowed you, come quickly to us,  
Warriors to war; wot God alone  
Who this battle-field may be able to keep."  
Waded the war-wolves, for water they recked not,  
The wikings' band west over Panta,  
O'er the clear water carried their shields,  
Boatmen to bank their bucklers bore.  
There facing their foes ready were standing  
Byrhtnoth with warriors: with shields he bade  
The war-hedge! work, and the war-band hold  
Fast 'gainst the foes. Then fight was nigh,  
Glory in battle; the time was come  
That fated men should there now fall.  
Then outcry was raised, the ravens circled,  
Eagle eager for prey; on earth was uproar.  
Then they let from their fists the file-hardened spears,  
The darts well-ground, fiercely fly forth:  
The bows were busy, board point received,  
Bitter the battle-rush, warriors fell down,  
On either hand the youths lay dead.

Translated by Garnett

By consent of Ginn & Co.

ALFRED'S PREFACE TO THE VERSION OF POPE GREGORY'S  
'PASTORAL CARE'

**K**ING ALFRED bids greet Bishop Wærferth with his words lovingly and with friendship; and I let it be known to thee that it has very often come into my mind, what wise men there formerly were throughout England, both of sacred and secular orders; and what happy times there were then throughout England; and how the kings who had power of the nation in those days obeyed God and his ministers; and they preserved peace, morality, and order at home, and at the same time enlarged their territory abroad; and how they prospered both with war and wisdom; and also the sacred orders, how zealous they were, both in teaching and learning, and in all the services they owed to God; and how foreigners came to this land in search of wisdom and instruction, and how we should now have to get them from abroad if we would have them. So general was its decay in England that there were very few on this side of the Humber who could understand their rituals in English, or translate a letter from Latin into English; and I believe there were not many beyond the Humber. There were so few that I cannot remember a single one south of the Thames when I came to the throne. Thanks be to God Almighty that we have any teachers among us now. And therefore I command thee to do as I believe thou art willing, to disengage thyself from worldly matters as often as thou canst, that thou mayst apply the wisdom which God has given thee wherever thou canst. Consider what punishments would come upon us on account of this world if we neither loved it (wisdom) ourselves nor suffered other men to obtain it: we should love the name only of Christian, and very few of the virtues.

When I considered all this I remembered also how I saw, before it had been all ravaged and burnt, how the churches throughout the whole of England stood filled with treasures and books, and there was also a great multitude of God's servants; but they had very little knowledge of the books, for they could not understand anything of them, because they were not written in their own language. As if they had said, "Our forefathers, who formerly held these places, loved wisdom, and through it they obtained wealth and bequeathed it to us. In this we can still see their tracks, but we cannot follow them, and therefore we have lost both the wealth and the wisdom, because we would not incline our hearts after their example."

When I remembered all this, I wondered extremely that the good and wise men, who were formerly all over England, and had perfectly learnt all the books, did not wish to translate them into their own language. But again, I soon answered myself and said, "They did not think that men would ever be so careless, and that learning would so decay; therefore they abstained

from translating, and they trusted that the wisdom in this land might increase with our knowledge of languages."

Then I remember how the law was first known in Hebrew, and again, when the Greeks had learnt it, they translated the whole of it into their own language, and all other books besides. And again, the Romans, when they had learnt it, they translated the whole of it through learned interpreters into their own language. And also all other Christian nations translated a part of them into their own language. Therefore it seems better to me, if ye think so, for us also to translate some books which are most needful for all men to know, into the language which we can all understand, and for you to do as we very easily can if we have tranquillity enough; that is, that all the youth now in England of free men, who are rich enough to be able to devote themselves to it, be set to learn as long as they are not fit for any other occupation, until that they are well able to read English writing: and let those be afterward taught more in the Latin language who are to continue learning and be promoted to a higher rank. When I remember how the knowledge of Latin had formerly decayed throughout England, and yet many could read English writing, I began among other various and manifold troubles of this kingdom, to translate into English the book which is called in Latin 'Pastoralis,' and in English 'Shepherd's Book,' sometimes word by word and sometimes according to the sense, as I had learnt it from Plegmund, my archbishop, and Asser, my bishop, and Grimbold, my mass-priest, and John, my mass-priest. And when I had learnt it as I could best understand it, and as I could most clearly interpret it, I translated it into English; and I will send a copy to every bishopric in my kingdom; and on each there is a clasp worth fifty mancus. And I command, in God's name, that no man take the clasp from the book or the book from the minister: 'it is uncertain how long there may be such learned bishops as now, thanks be to God, there are nearly everywhere; therefore, I wish them always to remain in their place, unless the bishop wish to take them with him, or they be lent out anywhere, or anyone make a copy from them.

## THE CONVERSION OF KING EDWIN OF NORTHUMBRIA

From Alfred's Translation of Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'

THE king, hearing these words, answered that he was both willing and bound to receive the faith which he taught, but that he would confer about it with his principal friends and counselors, to the end that if they also were of his opinion, they might all together be hallowed in Christ, the Fountain of life. Paulinus consenting, the king did as he said; for, holding

a council with the wise men, he asked of everyone in particular what he thought of the new doctrine and worship of the Deity that was preached. To whom the chief of his own priests, Coifi, immediately answered: "O king, consider what this is which is now preached to us; for verily I declare to you what I have learned for certain, that the religion which we have hitherto held has no virtue or utility in it. For none of your people has applied himself more diligently to the worship of our gods than I; and yet there are many who receive greater favors from you, and obtain greater dignities than I, and are more prosperous in all their undertakings. Now if our gods were good for anything, they would rather assist me, who have been more careful to serve them. It remains, therefore, that if upon examination, you find those new doctrines, which are now preached to us, better and more efficacious, we immediately receive them without delay."

Another of the king's chief men, assenting to his prudent words and exhortations, straightway added: "O king, the present life of man on earth seems to me, in comparison with the time of which we are ignorant, as if you were sitting at a feast with your chief men and thanes in the winter time, and a fire were kindled in the midst and the hall warmed, while everywhere outside there were raging whirlwinds of wintry rain and snow; and as if then there came a stray sparrow, and swiftly flew through the house, entering at one door and passing out through another. As long as he is inside, he is not buffeted by the winter's storm; but in the twinkling of an eye the lull for him is over, and he speeds from winter back to winter again, and is gone from your sight. So this life of man appeareth for a little time; but what cometh after, or what went before, we know not. If therefore this new doctrine contains something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed." The other elders and king's counselors spoke, by divine inspiration, to the same effect.

But Coifi added that he wished more attentively to hear Paulinus discourse concerning the God whom he preached; which he having by the king's command performed, Coifi, hearing his words, cried out: "I have long since been sensible that there was nothing in that which we worshiped, because the more diligently I sought after truth in that worship, the less I found it. But now I freely confess that such truth evidently appears in this preaching as can confer on us the gifts of life, of salvation, and of eternal happiness. For which reason I advise, O king, that we instantly abjure and set fire to those temples and altars which we have consecrated without reaping any benefit from them." In short, the king publicly gave his license to the blessed Paulinus to preach the Gospel, and, renouncing idolatry, declared that he received the faith of Christ; and when he inquired of the above-mentioned high priest who should first profane the altars and temples of their idols, with the enclosures that were about them, he answered, "I. Who is fitter to destroy as an example to all others those things which I worshiped in my folly and

ignorance, than I, acting upon the wisdom which has been given me by the true God?" Then immediately, casting away his vain superstition, he desired the king to furnish him with arms and a stallion, and, mounting the same, set out to destroy the idols — for it had not been lawful for the high priest to carry arms, or to ride except on a mare. Having, therefore, girt a sword about him, he took a spear in his hand, mounted the king's stallion, and proceeded to the idols. The multitude, beholding it, concluded he was insane; but he lost no time, for as soon as he drew near the temple he profaned it, casting into it the spear which he held; and, rejoicing in the knowledge of the worship of the true God, he commanded his companions to destroy the temple, with all its enclosures, and burn them with fire. The place where the idols were is still shown, not far from York to the eastward, beyond the river Derwent, and is now called Godmundingham, where the high priest, by the inspiration of the true God, polluted and destroyed the altars which he had himself consecrated.

### THE POET CÆDMON

From Alfred's Translation of Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'

**T**HERE was in the monastery of this abbess a certain brother especially distinguished by the grace of God, since he was wont to make poems breathing of piety and religion. Whatever he learned of sacred Scripture by the mouth of interpreters, he in a little time gave forth in poetical language composed with the greatest sweetness and depth of feeling, in English, his native tongue; and the effect of his poems was ever and anon to incite the souls of many to despise the world and long for the heavenly life. Not but that there were others after him among the people of the Angles who sought to compose religious poetry; but none there was who could equal him, for he did not learn the art of song from men, nor through the means of any man; rather did he receive it as a free gift from God. Hence it came to pass that he never was able to compose poetry of a frivolous or idle sort; none but such as pertain to religion suited a tongue so religious as his. Living always the life of a layman until well advanced in years, he had never learned the least thing about poetry. In fact, so little did he understand of it that when at a feast it would be ruled that everyone present should, for the entertainment of the others, sing in turn, he would, as soon as he saw the harp coming anywhere near him, jump up from the table in the midst of the banqueting, leave the place, and make the best of his way home.

This he had done at a certain time, and leaving the house where the feast was in progress, had gone out to the stable where the care of the cattle had

been assigned to him for that night. There, when it was time to go to sleep, he had lain down for that purpose. But while he slept some one stood by him in a dream, greeted him, called him by name, and said, "Cædmon, sing me something." To this he replied, "I know not how to sing, and that is the very reason why I left the feast and came here, because I could not sing." But the one who was talking with him answered, "No matter, you are to sing for me." "Well, then," said he, "what is it that I must sing?" "Sing," said the other, "the beginning of created things." At this reply he immediately began to sing verses in praise of God the Creator, verses that he had never heard, and whose meaning is as follows: "Now should we praise the Keeper of the Heavenly Kingdom, the might of the Creator and His counsel, the works of the Father of Glory; how He, though God Eternal, became the Author of all marvels. He, the Almighty Guardian of mankind, first created for the sons of men heaven as a roof, and afterwards the earth." This is the meaning, but not the precise order, of the words which he sang in his sleep; for no songs, however well they may be composed, can be rendered from one language to another without loss of grade and dignity. When he rose from sleep, he remembered all that he had sung while in that state, and shortly after added, in the same strain, many more words of a hymn befitting the majesty of God.

In the morning he went to the steward who was set over him, and showed him what gift he had acquired. Being led to the abbess, he was bidden to make known his dream and repeat his poem to the many learned men who were present, that they all might give their judgment concerning the thing which he related, and whence it was; and they were unanimously of the opinion that heavenly grace had been bestowed upon him by the Lord. They then set about expounding to him a piece of sacred history or teaching, bidding him, if he could, to turn it into the rhythm of poetry. This he undertook to do, and departed. In the morning he returned and delivered the passage assigned to him, converted into an excellent poem. The abbess, honoring the grace of God as displayed in the man, shortly afterward instructed him to forsake the condition of a layman and take upon himself the vows of a monk. She thereupon received him into the monastery with his whole family, and made him one of the company of the brethren, commanding that he should be taught the whole course and succession of Biblical history. He, in turn, calling to mind what he was able to learn by the hearing of the ear, and, as it were, like a clean animal, chewing upon it as a cud, transformed it all into most agreeable poetry; and, by echoing it back in a more harmonious form, made his teachers in turn listen to him. Thus he rehearsed the creation of the world, the origin of man, and all the story of Genesis; the departure of Israel from Egypt and their entry into the promised land, together with many other histories from Holy Writ; the incarnation of our Lord, His passion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven; the coming of the Holy Ghost and the teaching of the

apostles; moreover he made many poems about the terror of the future judgment, the awfulness of the pains of hell, and the joy of the heavenly kingdom, besides a great number about the mercies and judgments of God. In all these he exerted himself to allure men from the love of wickedness and to impel them to the love and practice of righteous living; for he was a very devout man, humbly submissive to the monastic rule, but full of consuming zeal against those who were disposed to act otherwise; for which reason he ended his life happily.

For when the time of his departure drew near, he labored for the space of fourteen days under a bodily infirmity which seemed to prepare the way, yet so moderate that he could talk and walk the whole time. In his neighborhood was the house to which those that were sick and like shortly to die, were carried. He desired the person that attended him, in the evening, as the night came on in which he was to depart this life, to make ready a place there for him to take his rest. This person, wondering why he should desire it, because there was as yet no sign of his dying soon, did what he had ordered. He accordingly went there, and, conversing pleasantly in a joyful manner with the rest that were in the house before, when it was past midnight he asked them whether they had the Eucharist there? They answered, "What need of the Eucharist? for you are not likely to die, since you talk so merrily with us, as if you were in perfect health." "However," he said, "bring me the Eucharist." Having received the same into his hand, he asked whether they were all in charity with him, and without any enmity and rancor. They answered that they were in perfect charity and free from anger; and in their turn asked him whether he was in the same mind toward them. He answered, "I am in charity, my children, with all the servants of God." Then, strengthening himself with the heavenly viaticum, he prepared for the entrance into another life, and asked how near the time was when the brothers were to be awakened to sing the nocturnal praises of our Lord. They answered, "It is not far off." Then he said, "Well, let us wait that hour," and, signing himself with the sign of the cross, he laid his head on the pillow and, falling into a slumber, ended his life so in silence.

## MEDIEVAL FRENCH LITERATURE

**I**T was in France that the new western world born of the Roman civilization and the Germanic invaders, transformed and amalgamated by Christianity, was to find its fullest literary expression. Incessantly fighting for its very life against pagan Normans (850-911), and, farther away, against pagan Hungarians, Mongols, and Saracens, it acquired a deep realization of its nature, of the identity of its Christianity and its social existence. In defending its life, it defended the true religion; its enemies were also the enemies of Christ. Christendom as a social entity, as the real fatherland, was born, with France as its sweetest part ["douce France"]. Literature in the new vernacular, which comes to us first in the Strasburg Oaths (842), is religious and even ascetic; but in the *cantilène* of 'St. Eulalie' (c. 880), the 'Life of St. Leger,' and a story of Christ's passion (tenth century), and especially in the 'Life of St. Alexis' (c. 1040) there is a literary technique of a high order.

After 950, relieved from this pressure, Christendom — France — broke out in streams of pilgrims to Saint James of Compostella (Santiago), in the westernmost part of Northern Spain, to the rather recently discovered (c. 830) grave of Apostle James, to Rome, and to Jerusalem, the three great sanctuaries of the time. Through those voyages to the very confines of the Christian world, the pilgrims (that is, actually or virtually, the whole nation) gave to that already concrete notion of Christendom its geographical definiteness, a sense of its frontiers and a realization of the continued need for a defense of Christ's country, whose highest sanctuary, Jerusalem, by a supreme irony of fate was in the hands of its enemies.

The pilgrims became almost at once Crusaders, changing their staffs for swords; a new ideal of holiness was born: the Christian fighter, not the saint praying, fasting, and dwelling apart from things, humbly or proudly submitting to persecution in a world which was not his, but the hero living, fighting, and dying for Christendom and for his country, for the militant Church with its two heads, the Pope and the Emperor.

This realization was revolutionary. The whole spirit of the time was permeated by it; its organizers were the monks of Cluny in French Burgundy, the reconquest of Spain and the First Crusade were among its principal effects, and the eleventh century its period of great achievements. Then, toward 1100, in the relaxation that usually follows a period of intense successful effort, the poetic picture of this receding view of the world with its fundamental springs of action and its ideal figures is brought forth in an epic which is the living synthesis of a great period. The 'Chanson de Roland,' with its story of the

treason of Ganelon, who plots the death of his stepson Roland and his rearguard in the gorge of Roncevaux in the Western Pyrenees at the hands of the Saracens, and of the vengeance of Charlemagne — all this built on an historical event of the year 778 — is not only a great literary monument; it is the expression of the new Europe and one of the two determining factors of the rise of European literature. The legend in its essentials was formed in the course of the eleventh century around the great figure of Charlemagne. To the formation of the legend the laymen gave interest, curiosity, admiration, and humanity; the clerics whatever suitable information they could find in books. For instance, although the clerics may have read in Einhardt that Roland and his rearguard had been cut to pieces, not by Saracens but by Christian Basques, mountaineer inhabitants of the Pyrenees, they cared little for information so out of keeping with the spirit of the time, centered as it was on the conflict between Christ and Mahomet. The constant movement of pilgrims, or Crusaders, along the roads was also favorable to the diffusion of local legends, and thus the heroic and transformed defeat of Roland at Roncevaux, at first perhaps talked about only in the region of Gascony and the Pyrenees, could, because so typical, be associated with the more general revival of Charlemagne's figure, and acquire, as early as the middle of the eleventh century, a universal import. It may very well be that the minstrel Taillefer sang of Roland at the battle of Hastings in 1066. When Turolde, however, about 1100, wrote his 'Chanson de Roland,' he gave definite and final expression to the more or less floating legendary material, and brought it into accord with his poetic impression of the facts. Its being rendered in a tune or psalmody of its own accompanied by the rote or small harp in the grand hall of a castle, on a public market-place, or, still more to the point, at a sanctuary along the road of pilgrimages, is but one of the distinctive features of the French epic which combined music and drama so effectively. The *laisse* or irregular stanza with its "assonance" or incomplete rhyme, the vowel of the final accented syllable alone being similar and the same for the whole *laisse*, served to mark the cadence that swung the hearers into community of feeling.

It was soon translated into German (1132) by the priest Conrad. This determined the development of Northern versions of the legend in Icelandic, Dutch, Welsh, English, and Norwegian, the Norwegian 'Karlsmagnussaga' (1230-1250) being the best known. In Spain, where it was also translated, it influenced the composition of the Spanish epic, 'Poema del Cid' (c. 1150), if it did not help towards the very creation of a national hero, Bernardo del Carpio, to be set up against the French Roland. Italy, on the other hand, adopted the legend with deep earnestness; the knights and consuls of Nepi, thirty-five miles north of Rome, in 1131 introduced into a public instrument a formula by which he who should break it would suffer the shameful death of Ganelon, who betrayed his peers [*socios*]. The legend so

constantly dwelt upon there was later used by the great poets of the Italian Renaissance for their most representative and important works: Pulci's 'Morgante Maggiore' (1481), Boiardo's 'Orlando Innamorato' (1486), and, greatest of all, Ariosto's 'Orlando Furioso' (1516).

In France, the vast epic material of more or less local and semi-historical legends born of the heroic and creative spirit of the eleventh century is unfolded in upward of a hundred epics or *chansons de geste*, of from 4000 to 14,000 lines each, which have reached us. They sing of William of Orange and his family, whose names are associated as leaders with the struggles against the Saracens in Southern France; of Ogier the Dane and Girard de Roussillon; builders or benefactors of great monasteries such as Vézelay and Saint Faron of Meaux; of Renaud de Montauban also — all fearless defenders of Christendom — who nevertheless rise, at one time, against their lord the emperor, for which they suffer great although somewhat deserved hardships. The *chansons de geste* also choose for their heroes feudal lords who know practically nothing of Crusade or emperor, but are absorbed in their intestine and relentless wars and vendettas: Garin le Loherain (the original Lohengrin — Loherain Garin) and Raoul de Cambrai; while in the 'Chanson d'Antioche' of Richard the Pilgrim, the epic of the First Crusade (1096) is told with the same fervor, if not the same genius, as Roland's death struggle at Roncevaux.

Some of these developments, like the 'Chanson d'Aiquin,' or 'Guillaume d'Orange,' were perhaps directly inspired by monks or clergy for the specific purpose of enhancing the prestige of their church or monastery, or to demonstrate their superiority over rival institutions, their claims being based on the authority of a *chanson de geste* which they had themselves inspired. But the very use to which the *chansons* might be put proves indubitably that they did not arise in this manner, nor were they generally employed as advertisements.

The *chanson de geste* gradually lost its epic character, expanding the adventurous, romantic, fantastic part, and introducing more and more themes drawn from Latin, Arabic, Germanic, and Celtic sources. Fables, those of Æsop and Phædrus about the fox, the cock, the bear, or the lion, either told orally or more probably transmitted from one school generation to another in the shadow of the cathedrals, develop early in the twelfth century into a vast animal epic around Chantecler the cock and his enemy Reynard the fox, whose very name becomes through the popularity of the stories the common name of this animal in French.

At the same time (the first quarter of the twelfth century), the Breton *jongleurs* [minstrels], who, more or less isolated in their peninsula, had not been quite so much under the influence of the new heroic Christian spirit, set up as a sort of antithesis to it the terrestrial love of Tristan and Yseult over against the divine fervor of Roland. Already, around 1130, the rivalry between the *jongleurs* of the *chansons de geste* and the Breton *jongleurs* was acute.

The great figures of Tristan and Yseult competed with the heroic French barons.

The cult of woman, under the favorable influence of troubadour poetry and life, found in Chrestien de Troyes, who wrote between 1160 and 1175, its principal narrative poet. Although he wrote a now lost version of Tristan and Yseult, the exclusive, unsocial, self-centered nature of these two personages does not seem to have appealed to him as much as it did to the Norman *trouvère* [poet] Thomas (c. 1160) and the Breton Bérout, whose poems on that subject, particularly the first, although incompletely preserved, determined the final form of the legend, and served as models for the beautiful German 'Tristan' of Gottfried of Strasburg (after 1200), the basis of Wagner's opera. Whatever the individual Celtic sources may be, the poem is essentially French, and belongs in its composition and its themes to this period of French literature, where it is fully conditioned and explained.

As for Chrestien, using the Breton heroes Erec, Yvain, Lancelot, and Gawain's nephew Cligés, son of Alexander the Great, all knights of the Round Table at the court of Arthur and his queen Guinevere, he tells us stories of knighthood at the service of both love and action (usually in behalf of the oppressed), whence often appears a sort of moral conflict as to which of these two masters the knight should follow. Observe the severity of the lady in 'Yvain' when the knight has been unduly absorbed by his undertakings, or in 'Erec et Enide,' the courting of adventure when Erec is reminded by his lady that a knight should not be exclusively occupied with love; or the combination of both love and action in Lancelot's rescue of Queen Guinevere. This ideal hero as conceived and developed by Chrestien will hold sway in literature until the advent of his caricature, Don Quixote (1605-1613), by Cervantes.

Chrestien shows us also the souls of his heroes; their perplexities, hesitations, and anxieties, especially when a prey to love, are analyzed in long soliloquies. His style is so fluent and so smooth that we may consider him as the first of the long line of French writers who are distinguished by almost transparent clarity and easy flowing expression.

Finally, in 'Perceval,' Chrestien raised his knight to a higher spiritual level, no longer seeking adventures for human, but for divine love, for the mystic vessel which had contained the blood of Christ.

The contact with Celtic or Breton lore is close in the lays of Marie de France who, in short poems of one hundred and fifty to eight hundred lines, written 1167-1184, tells us, indeed not so smoothly and masterfully as Chrestien, but with naïve charm, adventures of love in either natural or fantastical circumstances, always with some moral import or human sympathy. In 'Les Deux Amants' [The Two Lovers] a lover carries his beloved up a mountain, refusing the strengthening medicine that she offers him, and dies on completing his task. 'Lanval' is the story of a knight loved by a fairy, who must

keep this love secret under penalty of losing his mistress, and who is then compelled, in order to defend himself against a grave accusation, to boast of his beautiful *amante*, and almost loses her and his life as a consequence.

This literature of love and adventure presupposes a different audience from that of the *chansons de geste*. Written in rhymed couplets, it is not sung to the mixed crowd; it is read to courtly gatherings of noble knights and ladies. The Provençal courts, with their literary activity and code of courtesy, have initiated a new and important mode of living among the aristocracy. To this élite the learned jongleurs or trouvères will supply the rich lore of ancient classical stories and legends, modernized, adapted to the new ideals: the 'Énéas' will tell of the adventures and love of that antique knight Æneas; the 'Roman de Troie' of Benoît de Sainte-More (or Maure) those of Paris and Helen, and the celebrated story which through Boccaccio and Chaucer came to Shakespeare as the loves of Troilus and Cressida. The trouvères Alexandre de Bernay and Lambert le Tort popularize the legend of Alexander the Great in the 'Roman d'Alexandre' of about 20,000 lines (before 1177), using the twelve-syllable verse instead of the usual decasyllabic or octosyllabic with such good effect that it came to be called Alexandrine verse. The 'Roman de Thèbes' of about 10,000 lines popularizes the Greek legends of Œdipus on the basis of Statius' 'Thebais.'

The European success of all this Celtic (or pseudo-Celtic) and classical literature thus medievalized was as great as that of the *chansons de geste*. Dante in the fifth canto of the 'Inferno' sees these heroes as they were re-created by the French trouvères; Achilles is a great lover, and Francesca da Rimini is carried to her fatal love by reading about Lancelot. In fact the Greeks of Constantinople forgot their own Homer to adopt the French transformation of the legend of Troy.

Under the influence of the literary curiosity characteristic of the second half of the twelfth century, the King of England, Henry II (1154-89), and his wife Eleanor request of the poet Wace (or Gace) the story of some of the races which make up their kingdom, the Bretons and the Normans, which Wace tells respectively in the 15,000 lines of his 'Geste des Bretons' or 'Brut' (1157), and the 16,000 lines of his 'Geste des Normans' or 'Roman de Rou' (1160-74), the former playing an important part in the development of the Arthurian legend.

Even the art of the pure story-teller in prose, which the trouvères despised, seems to come partly to its own in that delightful *chante-fable*, 'Aucassin et Nicolette,' which is called by its author a "song-story" in that the narrative is carried forward by alternate sections in prose and verse, giving the minstrel relating the tale opportunity to display his talents both in song and recitation. The unique manuscript of the story also provides music for the verse, and is thus an important source for our knowledge of medieval secular music. The author and the exact date of 'Aucassin and Nicolette' are un-

known, but the internal evidence of linguistic forms and use of assonance point to the borderland of Champagne and Picardy as the locality and the later twelfth century as the date of the original draft. The widely known story of Flore and Blanchefleur seems to have supplied certain details of the plot. 'Aucassin and Nicolette' is romance at its simplest and most direct. Its perennial appeal rests in the freshness of the poetic atmosphere and its skillfully contrived effect of artlessness mingled with emotion.

The thirteenth century is the epoch in which all the various elements of which medieval culture is composed blossom forth in maturity. A government, that of Saint Louis (1226-70), nearly realizing the Charlemagne ideal of the eleventh century; a church fully conscious of its doctrine and entity as expounded in such works as the 'Summa Theologica' of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), having developed its intellectual organs the Universities, especially the great Alma Mater of Paris; a state still medieval, based on personal ties, but with active and almost independent classes: a clergy, a nobility, a third estate; a society still intuitive, capable of Crusades, but also rational within its mystic sphere; an artistic expression majestic, noble, and complete, if not strikingly original, which appears in the great cathedrals of Our Lady at Chartres, Amiens, Paris, and Rheims, all of that period; and in literature a development of the old forms, a systematic filling out of the medieval literary domain with new forms, still in the old traditional spirit, however: such is the thirteenth century.

Literary activity is no longer confined to professionals: lords like Conon de Béthune (d. 1219) and the Chastelain de Coucy (d. 1203) sing of love in the first individualistic lyric poetry of the North, and a Sire de Villehardouin (d. 1212), one of the principal leaders of the Fourth Crusade (1204) which established for half a century a Latin empire in Constantinople, created French historical prose by his 'Histoire de la Conquête de Constantinople,' a really mature work of inestimable value as a historical document and well worthy of its place in literature for its human element, for its picture of the period, and for its expression of the personality of the author.

Epic poetry is now represented in a distinguished manner by the 'Aymery de Narbonne' and 'Girart de Viane' of Bertrand de Bar-sur-Aube (c. 1200), whose poems inspired Victor Hugo's 'Aymerillot' and 'Le Mariage de Roland.' Adenet le Roi (c. 1275) wrote some famous tales like 'Berte aux Grands Pieds' [Bertha of the Large Feet—the mother of Charlemagne]; and about 1220 the famous 'Huon de Bordeaux' was composed, a work still popular in the time of Shakespeare. In fact the great epic cycles, embracing all the heroic legends and making them into vast bodies of systematized stories or history, are the work of that period, while the courtly romance, as inaugurated by Chrestien in 'Cligés,' finds a worthy development in such works as those about Joffrois, the knight born of Mars and Venus whose adventures are so entertainingly recounted in 'Cléomadès,' and

about Guy de Warwick and others. In his more fantastic and Breton manner, Chrestien has a worthy successor in Raoul de Houdenc, whose 'Meraugis' and 'Vengeance Radiguel' are quite notable.

The lays of love of Marie de France develop into short romantic novels, such as the 'Roman de la Violette' by Gerbert de Montreuil, with the theme of Shakespeare's 'Cymbeline,' and even more especially such as the 'Chastelaine de Vergy,' who dies of a broken heart on being led to believe, wrongly, that her lover has betrayed her. The latter kills himself on the body of his mistress, and the traitor, the Duchess of Burgundy herself, meets the death that she deserves at the hands of her own husband. Numerous redactions in prose spread those themes, motives, and legends far and wide, and they find abroad new imitations. The Middle English 'Le Morte Arthur' and the 'Morte Darthur' of Sir Thomas Malory go back to these French prose versions of the legend.

The Christian religion had been expanding to new proportions the cult of the Virgin Mary in the latter half of the twelfth century, and the great cathedrals had been built under her patronage. Gautier de Coincy (1177-1236) in the 30,000 lines of his 'Miracles de la Sainte Vierge' relates fifty-four such miracles, the importance of which, as well as that of others similar in nature partly inspired by him, has been great in art, drama, and legend up to the present day. Maeterlinck's 'Sister Beatrice' is but one of several modern adaptations of the miracles.

But the philosophy of the schools reigning supreme in the Latin world of the universities, a philosophy which systematically interpreted nature and history as the image of the spiritual mystic life, the visible as the figure of the invisible and the real, had already come to full consciousness in literature and found its most adequate expression in the 'Roman de la Rose,' begun (1225-30) by Guillaume de Lorris (who wrote some 4000 lines), and finished (1275-80) by Jean de Meung (who extended it to 23,000 lines). It is the outstanding and most characteristic work of the age. It definitely established allegory as a self-sufficing form in literature and art. All the allegorical art and literature of the period which followed, down to the classical age and perhaps even later, directly or indirectly derive from it. Chaucer made an English verse translation which survives only in fragmentary form. It was also translated, immediately upon its appearance, into Italian. The 'Roman de la Rose' is a dream of the twenty-year-old poet. While walking in the month of May, he arrives at a garden whose walls bear images of Hatred, Greed, Sadness, Old Age, and Meanness; but there is a door which is opened to him by Idleness, the owner of the garden; inside, Joy leads a dance in which Generosity and Youth take part. Near the tomb of Narcissus is the Fountain of Love and a cluster of roses on a thorny bush. The God of Love wounds him with his arrows, Beauty, Simplicity, etc. He makes friends with Fine Greeting, Frankness, and Pity; but the Rose is guarded by Evil Mouth, Fear,

Shame, and Reason. He succeeds finally in obtaining a kiss from the Rose, but Evil Mouth denounces him and Jealousy shuts them up in a tower. Guillaume's charming little allegory stops here, presumably not far from the end. Sixty years later, the allegory was completed by Jean de Meung; the Lover plucks the Rose . . . and the poet awakens after his 23,000-line dream. But in that second part of 18,000 lines an entire change of spirit has taken place: Reason becomes the real hero, reviews the world, and passes judgment, for the most part satirical, on the whole range of human thought and action as presented by the thirteenth century. Gaston Paris characterizes both parts to a nicety when he sees in Guillaume de Lorris' part a psychological epic and in Jean de Meung's a piece of rationalistic satire by the medieval Voltaire.

Guillaume de Lorris' psychological epic is the culmination of that epic poetry which is the typical expression of the Middle Ages, while Jean de Meung's composition already announces the advent of a new age and the disintegration of the medieval spirit.

This double character of the thirteenth century as the apogee of medievalism and the beginning of its decomposition appears also in the advent of the secular drama. By the year 1200 the elements of representation in the Catholic liturgy had evolved into an actual semi-liturgical or even secular drama, in which, however, the spectacular or representative features still predominated. The didactic trait of Christian plastic art is very apparent in the semi-liturgical play 'Representation of Adam' (c. 1150), which purports to show the fall of Adam and Eve, their subsequent punishment, and the death of Abel at the hands of Cain. Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden, however, is justly celebrated as a masterpiece of psychological interpretation. The contrast between her exultation after eating of the forbidden fruit and the instantaneous remorse of Adam, is also found in Book IX of Milton's 'Paradise Lost.'

But with Bodel's 'Jeu de Saint Nicolas' (c. 1200) the drama was emancipated. Whether it was played for or by a *puy*, as these semi-religious, semi-literary associations were called, it was really acted in the modern sense of the word, no longer officiated. The 'Jeu de Saint Nicolas' deals with the rescue of a poor pilgrim by Saint Nicholas, his special protector, from the hands of the victorious Saracens. If the battle scene between Christians and Mohammedans is epic rather than dramatic, it is in itself sublime. Rutebeuf also wrote his 'Miracle de Théophile' about 1260, in which the protagonist sells his soul to the Devil to secure reinstatement in the situation from which his bishop has dispossessed him, and is finally saved by the intervention of Our Lady. These plays are essentially living and spoken tableaux, aiming at a representation of a well-known story. In other words, there is as yet hardly any dramatic idea, hardly any action unfolding itself in the souls of the characters and driving the play on to its dénouement. The poet is more like the illustrator of a book finding pictures for the text. The real dramatic idea

appears in the tavern scenes of the 'Jeu de Saint Nicolas,' and in the comic scenes of a sort of review of town scandals written by Adam de la Halle of Arras, 'Le Jeu de la Feuillée' (c. 1260), as well as in his 'Robin et Marion' (c. 1284), a sort of comic opera. They are sketches such as wandering *jongleurs* or minstrels might have played for ages: a quarrel in a tavern over the payment of the score, a trick played on a monk, the pummeling of a peasant by a knight over some rustic beauty. Such comic scenes, freed from their banality, made effective by original observation, and organically grouped together, constitute one of the masterpieces of the pre-Renaissance period: 'La Farce de Maistre Pathelin' (c. 1450).

Yet the appearance of the dramatic sense, even under these restricted conditions, in the thirteenth century, is another sign of the important change taking place in the medieval spirit, its disintegration, the preparation of a new epoch.

The medieval period was essentially an epic age, just as the classical age of the seventeenth century was the age of the drama. Its representation of the world was that of a conflict between forces realizing themselves in individuals, in heroes — forces of which the heroes were but the agents. The classical period, on the other hand, sees the world-conflict as taking place in the individual and between individual wills, passions, and interests. The epic poem, by its form, rhythm, and what might be called its symphony, admirably expresses the former conception. The drama by singling out individuals, characters, and presenting them to us in action, just as forcibly renders the latter view.

By the second half of the thirteenth century, the early preparation for the classical age is thus marked by the increasing importance of the new art-form, although it is not until the end of the sixteenth century that the serious drama begins to produce its masterpieces.

In the progress toward this great intellectual revolution, the literary leadership held so far by France was, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, to pass to Italy, to Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. This shifting of influence was rather sudden, for on the very eve of the rise of Italian pre-eminence (at the end of the thirteenth century), both the popular and aristocratic literature of France had so won the favor of the Italian élite that Brunetto Latini, the Florentine scholar, poet, and orator (1230-94), wrote his most important book, 'Le Trésor,' in French, as being the sweetest language and best known to all manner of people. About the same time (1298), Marco Polo was also dictating in French the famous story of his travels in China.

HENRI F. MULLER

FROM THE 'SONG OF ROLAND'

OLIVER mounts upon a lofty peak,  
 Looks to his right along the valley green,  
 The pagan tribes approaching there appear;  
 He calls Rollanz, his companion, to see:  
 "What sound is this, come out of Spain, we hear,  
 What hauberks bright, what helmets these that gleam?  
 They'll smite our Franks with fury past belief,  
 He knew it, Guenes, the traitor and the thief,  
 Who chose us out before the King our chief."  
 Answers the count Rollanz: "Olivier, cease.  
 That man is my good-father; hold thy peace."

Upon a peak is Oliver mounted,  
 Kingdom of Spain he sees before him spread,  
 And Sarrazins, so many gatherèd.  
 Their helmets gleam, with gold are jewellèd,  
 Also their shields, their hauberks orfreyèd,  
 Also their swords, ensigns on spears fixèd.  
 Rank beyond rank could not be numberèd,  
 So many there, no measure could he set.  
 In his own heart he's sore astonishèd,  
 Fast as he could, down from the peak hath sped,  
 Comes to the Franks, to them his tale hath said.

Says Oliver: "Pagans from there I saw;  
 Never on earth did any man see more.  
 Gainst us their shields an hundred thousand bore,  
 That lacèd helms and shining hauberks wore;  
 And, bolt upright, their bright brown spearheads shone,  
 Battle we'll have as never was before.  
 Lords of the Franks, God keep you in valor!  
 So hold your ground, we be not overborne!"  
 Then say the Franks: "Shame take him that goes off:  
 If we must die, then perish one and all."

Says Oliver: "Pagans in force abound,  
 While of us Franks but very few I count;  
 Comrade Rollanz, your horn I pray you sound!  
 If Charlès hear, he'll turn his armies round."  
 Answers Rollanz: "A fool I should be found;

In France the Douce would perish my renown.  
 With Durendal I'll lay on thick and stout,  
 In blood the blade, to its golden hilt, I'll drown.  
 Felon pagans to th' pass shall not come down;  
 I pledge you now, to death they all are bound."

"Comrade Rollanz, sound the olifant, I pray;  
 If Charlès hear, the host he'll turn again;  
 Will succor us our King and baronage."  
 Answers Rollanz: "Never, by God, I say,  
 For my misdeed shall kinsmen bear the blame,  
 Nor France the Douce fall into evil fame!  
 Rather stout blows with Durendal I'll lay,  
 With my good sword that by my side doth sway;  
 Till bloodied o'er you shall behold the blade.  
 Felon pagans are gathered to their shame;  
 I pledge you now, to death they're doomed today."

"Comrade Rollanz, once sound your olifant!  
 If Charlès hear, where in the pass he stands,  
 I pledge you now, they'll turn again, the Franks."  
 "Never, by God," then answers him Rollanz,  
 "Shall it be said by any living man,  
 That for pagans I took my horn in hand!  
 Never by me shall men reproach my clan.  
 When I am come into the battle grand,  
 And blows lay on, by hundred, by thousand,  
 Of Durendal bloodied you'll see the brand.  
 Franks are good men; like vassals brave they'll stand;  
 Nay, Spanish men from death have no warrant."

Says Oliver: "In this I see no blame;  
 I have beheld the Sarrazins of Spain;  
 Covered with them, the mountains and the vales,  
 The wastes I saw, and all the farthest plains.  
 A muster great they've made, this people strange;  
 We have of men a very little tale."  
 Answers Rollanz: "My anger is inflamed.  
 Never, please God, His Angels, and His Saints,  
 Never by me shall Frankish valor fail!  
 Rather I'll die than shame shall me attain.  
 Therefore strike on, the Emperor's love to gain."  
 Pride hath Rollanz, wisdom Olivier hath;

And both of them shew marvelous courage;  
 Once they are horsed, once they have donned their arms,  
 Rather they'd die than from the battle pass.  
 Good are the counts and lofty their language.  
 Felon pagans come cantering in their wrath.  
 Says Oliver: "Behold and see, Rollanz,  
 These are right near, but Charles is very far.  
 On the olifant deign now to sound a blast;  
 Were the King here, we should not fear damage.  
 Only look up towards the Pass of Aspre,  
 In sorrow there you'll see the whole rereward.  
 Who does this deed, does no more afterward."  
 Answers Rollanz: "Utter not such outrage!  
 Evil his heart that is in thought coward!  
 We shall remain firm in our place installed;  
 From us the blows shall come, from us the assault."

When Rollanz sees that now must be combat,  
 More fierce he's found than lion or leopard;  
 The Franks he calls, and Oliver commands;  
 "Now say no more, my friends, nor thou, comrade.  
 That Emperor, who left us Franks on guard,  
 A thousand score stout men he set apart,  
 And well he knows, not one will prove coward.  
 Man for his lord should suffer with good heart,  
 Of bitter cold and great heat bear the smart,  
 His blood let drain, and all his flesh be scarred.  
 Strike with thy lance, and I with Durendal,  
 With my good sword that was the King's reward.  
 So, if I die, who has it afterward  
 Noble vassal's he well may say it was."

From the other part is the Archbishop Turpin,  
 He pricks his horse and mounts upon a hill;  
 Calling the Franks, sermon to them begins:  
 "My lords barons, Charles left us here for this;  
 He is our King, well may we die for him:  
 To Christendom good service offering.  
 Battle you'll have, you all are bound to it,  
 For with your eyes you see the Sarrazins.  
 Pray for God's grace, confessing Him your sins!  
 For your souls' health, I'll absolution give;  
 So, though you die, blest martyrs shall you live,

Thrones you shall win in the great Paradis."  
 The Franks dismount, upon the ground are lit.  
 That Archbishop God's Benediction gives,  
 For their penance, good blows to strike he bids.

The Franks arise, and stand upon their feet,  
 They're well absolved, and from their sins made clean,  
 And the Archbishop has signed them with God's seal;  
 And next they mount upon their chargers keen;  
 By rule of knights they have put on their gear,  
 For battle all appareled as is meet.  
 The count Rollant calls Oliver, and speaks:  
 "Comrade and friend, now clearly have you seen  
 That Guenelun hath got us by deceit;  
 Gold hath he ta'en; much wealth is his to keep;  
 That Emperor vengeance for us must wreak.  
 King Marsilies hath bargained for us cheap;  
 At the sword's point he yet shall pay our meed."

To Spanish pass is Rollanz now going  
 On Veillantif, his good steed, galloping;  
 He is well armed, pride is in his bearing,  
 He goes, so brave, his spear in hand holding,  
 He goes, its point against the sky turning;  
 A gonfalon all white thereon he's pinned,  
 Down to his hand flutters the golden fringe:  
 Noble his limbs, his face clear and smiling.  
 His companion goes after, following,  
 The men of France their warrant find in him.  
 Proudly he looks towards the Sarrazins,  
 And to the Franks sweetly, himself humbling;  
 And courteously has said to them this thing:  
 "My lords barons, go now your pace holding!  
 Pagans are come great martyrdom seeking;  
 Noble and fair reward this day shall bring,  
 Was never won by any Frankish King."  
 Upon these words the hosts are come touching.

Speaks Oliver; "No more now will I say.  
 Your Olifant, to sound it do not deign,  
 Since from Carlun you'll never more have aid.  
 He has not heard; no fault of his, so brave.  
 Those with him there are never to be blamed.

So canter on, with what prowess you may!  
 Lords and barons, firmly your ground maintain!  
 Be minded well, I pray you in God's Name,  
 Stout blows to strike, to give as you shall take.  
 Forget the cry of Charles we never may."  
 Upon this word the Franks cry out amain.  
 Who then had heard them all "Monjoie!" acclaim  
 Of vassalage might well recall the tale.  
 They canter forth, God! with what proud parade,  
 Pricking their spurs, the better speed to gain;  
 They go to strike — what other thing could they? —  
 But Sarrazins are not at all afraid.  
 Pagans and Franks, you'd see them now engaged.

Marsile's nephew, his name is Aëlroth,  
 First of them all canters before the host,  
 Says of our Franks these ill words as he goes:  
 "Felons of France, so here on us you close!  
 Betrayed you has he that to guard you ought;  
 Mad is the King who has left you in this post.  
 So shall the fame of France the Douce be lost,  
 And the right arm from Charlès' body torn."  
 When Rollant hears, what rage he has, by God!  
 His steed he spurs, gallops with great effort;  
 He goes, that count, to strike with all his force,  
 The shield he breaks, the hauberk's seam unsews,  
 Slices the heart, and shatters up the bones,  
 All of the spine he severs with that blow,  
 And with his spear the soul from body throws,  
 So well he's pinned, he shakes in the air that corse,  
 On his spear's hilt he's flung it from the horse:  
 So in two halves Aëlroth's neck he broke,  
 Nor left him yet, they say, but rather spoke:  
 "Avaunt, culvert! A madman Charles is not,  
 No treachery was ever in his thought.  
 Proudly he did, who left us in this post;  
 The fame of France the Douce shall not be lost.  
 Strike on, the Franks! Ours are the foremost blows.  
 For we are right, but these gluttons are wrong."

A duke there was, his name was Falfarun,  
 Brother was he to King Marsiliun,  
 He held their land, Dathan's and Abirun's;

Bneath the sky no more encrimed felun;  
 Between his eyes so broad was he in front  
 A great half-foot you'd measure there in full.  
 His nephew's dead he's seen with grief enough,  
 Comes through the press and wildy forth he runs,  
 Aloud he shouts their cry the pagans use;  
 And to the Franks is right contrarious:  
 "Honor of France the Douce shall fall to us!"  
 Hears Oliver, he's very furious,  
 His horse he pricks with both his golden spurs,  
 And goes to strike, ev'n as a baron doth;  
 The shield he breaks and through the hauberk cuts,  
 His ensign's fringe into the carcass thrusts,  
 On his spear's hilt he's flung it dead in dust.  
 Looks on the ground, sees glutton lying thus,  
 And says to him, with reason proud enough:  
 "From threatening, culvert, your mouth I've shut,  
 Strike on, the Franks! Right well we'll overcome."  
 "Monjoie," he shouts, 'twas the ensign of Carlun.

The count Rollanz calls upon Oliver:  
 "Sir companion, witness you'll freely bear,  
 The Archbishop is a right good chevalier,  
 None is better beneath Heaven anywhere;  
 Well can he strike with lance and well with spear."  
 Answers that count: "Support to him we'll bear!"  
 Upon that word the Franks again make yare;  
 Hard are the blows, slaughter and suffering there,  
 For Christians too, most bitter grief and care.  
 Who could had seen Rollanz and Oliver  
 With their good swords to strike and to slaughter!  
 And the Archbishop lays on there with his spear.  
 Those that are dead, men well may hold them dear.  
 In charters and in briefs is written clear,  
 Four thousand fell, and more, the tales declare.  
 Gainst four assaults easily did they fare,  
 But then the fifth brought heavy griefs to bear.  
 They all are slain, those Frankish chevaliers;  
 Only threescore, whom God was pleased to spare,  
 Before these die, they'll sell them very dear.

The count Rollant great loss of his men sees,  
 His companion Olivier calls, and speaks:

"Sir and comrade, in God's Name, That you keeps,  
Such good vassals you see lie here in heaps;  
For France the Douce, fair country, may we weep,  
Of such barons long desolate she'll be.  
Ah! King and friend, wherefore are you not here?  
How, Oliver, brother, can we achieve?  
And by what means our news to him repeat?"  
Says Oliver: "I know not how to seek;  
Rather I'll die than shame come of this feat."

Then says Rollanz: "I'll wind this olifant,  
If Charlès hear, where in the pass he stands,  
I pledge you now they will return, the Franks."  
Says Oliver: "Great shame would come of that;  
And a reproach on every one, your clan,  
That shall endure while each lives in the land,  
When I implored, you would not do this act;  
Doing it now, no praise from me you'll have:  
So wind your horn, but not by courage rash,  
Seeing that both your arms with blood are splashed."  
Answers that count: "Fine blows I've struck them back."

Then says Rollant: "Strong it is now, our battle;  
I'll wind my horn, so the King hears it, Charlès."  
Says Oliver: "That act were not a vassal's.  
When I implored you, comrade, you were wrathful.  
Were the King here, we had not borne such damage.  
Nor should we blame those with him there, his army."  
Says Oliver: "Now by my beard, hereafter  
If I may see my gentle sister Alde,  
She in her arms, I swear, shall never clasp you."

Then says Rollanz: "Wherefore so wroth with me?"  
He answers him: "Comrade, it was your deed:  
Vassalage comes by sense, and not folly;  
Prudence more worth is than stupidity.  
Here are Franks dead, all for your trickery;  
No more service to Carlun may we yield.  
My lord were here now, had you trusted me,  
And fought and won this battle then had we,  
Taken or slain were the king Marsilie.  
In your prowess, Rollanz, no good we've seen!  
Charlès the great in vain your aid will seek —

None such as he till God His Judgment speak; —  
 Here must you die, and France in shame be steeped;  
 Here perishes our loyal company,  
 Before this night great severance and grief."

That Archbishop has heard them, how they spoke,  
 His horse he pricks with his fine spurs of gold,  
 Coming to them he takes up his reproach:  
 "Sir Oliver, and you, Sir Rollant, both,  
 For God I pray, do not each other scold!  
 No help it were to us, the horn to blow,  
 But, none the less, it may be better so;  
 The King will come, with vengeance that he owes;  
 These Spanish men never away shall go.  
 Our Franks here, each descending from his horse,  
 Will find us dead, and limb from body torn;  
 They'll take us hence, on biers and litters borne;  
 With pity and with grief for us they'll mourn;  
 They'll bury each in some old minster-close;  
 No wolf nor swine nor dog shall gnaw our bones."  
 Answers Rollant: "Sir, very well you spoke."  
 Rollant hath set the olifant to his mouth,  
 He grasps it well, and with great virtue sounds.  
 High are those peaks, afar it rings and loud,  
 Thirty great leagues they hear its echoes mount.  
 So Charles heard, and all his comrades round;  
 Then said that King: "Battle they do, our counts."  
 And Guenelun answered, contrarious:  
 "That were a lie, in any other mouth."

The Count Rollanz, with sorrow and with pangs,  
 And with great pain sounded his olifant:  
 Out of his mouth the clear blood leaped and ran,  
 About his brain the very temples cracked.  
 Loud is its voice, that horn he holds in hand;  
 Charles hath heard, where in the pass he stands,  
 And Neimès hears, and listen all the Franks.  
 Then says the King: "I hear his horn, Rollant's;  
 He'd never sound, but he were in combat."  
 Answers him Guenes: "It is not battle, that.  
 Now are you old, blossoming white and blanced,  
 Yet by such words you still appear infant.  
 You know full well the great pride of Rollant;

Marvel it is, God stays so tolerant.  
 Noples he took, not waiting your command;  
 Thence issued forth the Sarrazins, a band  
 With vassalage had fought against Rollant;  
 He slew them first, with Durendal his brand,  
 Then washed their blood with water from the land;  
 So what he'd done might not be seen of man.  
 He for a hare goes all day, horn in hand;  
 Before his peers in foolish jest he brags.  
 No race neath heav'n in field him dare attack.  
 So canter on! Nay, wherefore hold we back?  
 Terra Major is far away, our land."

The count Rollanz, though blood his mouth doth stain,  
 And burst are both the temples of his brain,  
 His olifant he sounds with grief and pain;  
 Charlès hath heard, listen the Franks again.  
 "That horn," the King says, "hath a mighty strain!"  
 Answers Duke Neimes: "A baron blows with pain!  
 Battle is there, indeed I see it plain,  
 He is betrayed, by one that still doth feign.  
 Equip you, sir, cry out your old refrain,  
 That noble band, go succor them amain!  
 Enough you've heard how Rollant doth complain."

That Emperor hath bid them sound their horns.  
 The Franks dismount, and dress themselves for war,  
 Put hauberks on, helmets and golden swords;  
 Fine shields they have, and spears of length and force;  
 Scarlet and blue and white their ensigns float.  
 His charger mounts each baron of the host;  
 They spur with haste as through the pass they go.  
 Nor was there one but thus to's neighbor spoke:  
 "Now, ere he die, may we see Rollant, so  
 Ranged by his side we'll give some goodly blows."  
 But what avail? They've stayed too long below.  
 That eventide is light as was the day;  
 Their armor shines beneath the sun's clear ray,  
 Hauberks and helms throw off a dazzling flame,  
 And blazoned shields, flowered in bright array,  
 Also their spears, with golden ensigns gay.  
 That Emperor, he canters on with rage,  
 And all the Franks with wonder and dismay;

There is not one can bitter tears restrain,  
 And for Rollant they're very sore afraid.  
 The King has bid them seize that county Guene,  
 And charged with him the scullions of his train:  
 The master-cook he's called, Besgun by name:  
 "Guard me him well, his felony is plain,  
 Who in my house vile treachery has made."  
 He holds him, and a hundred others takes  
 From the kitchen, both good and evil knaves;  
 Then Guenè's beard and both his cheeks they shaved,  
 And four blows each with their closed fists they gave,  
 They trounced him well with cudgels and with staves,  
 And on his neck they clasped an iron chain;  
 So like a bear enchained they held him safe,  
 On a pack-mule they set him in his shame:  
 Kept him till Charles should call for him again.

High were the peaks and shadowy and grand,  
 The valleys deep, the rivers swiftly ran.  
 Trumpets they blew in rear and in the van,  
 Till all again answered that olifant.  
 That Emperor canters with fury mad,  
 And all the Franks dismay and wonder have;  
 There is not one but weeps and waxes sad  
 And all pray God that He will guard Rollant  
 Till in the field together they may stand;  
 There by his side they'll strike as well they can.  
 But what avail? No good there is in that;  
 They're not in time; too long have they held back.  
 In his great rage on canters Charlemagne;  
 Over his sark his beard is flowing plain.  
 Barons of France, in haste they spur and strain;  
 There is not one that can his wrath contain  
 That they are not with Rollant the Captain,  
 Whereas he fights the Sarrazins of Spain.  
 If he be struck, will not one soul remain.  
 — God! Sixty men are all now in his train!  
 Never a king had better Capitains.

Translated by Charles Scott Moncrieff

## FROM THE 'YVAIN' OF CHRESTIEN DE TROYES

## YVAIN DOES BATTLE AT THE MARVELOUS SPRING

**M**Y lord Yvain mounts at once, intending to avenge, if possible, his cousin's disgrace before he returns. The squire ran for the arms and steed; he mounted at once without delay, since he was already equipped with shoes and nails. Then he followed his master's track until he saw him standing dismounted, waiting to one side of the road in a place apart. He brought him his harness and equipment, and then accoutred him. My lord Yvain made no delay after putting on his arms, but hastily made his way each day over the mountains and through the valleys, through the forests long and wide, through strange and wild country, passing through many gruesome spots, many a danger and many a strait, until he came directly to the path, which was full of brambles and dark enough: then he felt he was safe at last, and could not now lose his way. Whoever may have to pay the cost, he will not stop until he sees the pine which shades the spring and stone, and the tempest of hail and rain and thunder and wind. That night, you may be sure, he had such lodging as he desired, for he found the vavasor to be even more polite and courteous than he had been told, and in the damsel he perceived a hundred times more sense and beauty than Calogrenant had spoken of, for one cannot rehearse the sum of a lady's or a good man's qualities. The moment such a man devotes himself to virtue, his story cannot be summed up or told, for no tongue could estimate the honorable deeds of such a gentleman. My lord Yvain was well content with the excellent lodging he had that night, and when he entered the clearing the next day, he met the bulls and the rustic boor who showed him the way to take. But more than a hundred times he crossed himself at sight of the monster before him — how Nature had ever been able to form such a hideous, ugly creature. Then to the spring he made his way, and found there all that he wished to see. Without hesitation and without sitting down he poured the basin full of water upon the stone, when straightway it began to blow and rain, and such a storm was raised as had been foretold. And when God had appeased the storm, the birds came to perch upon the pine, and sang their joyous songs up above the perilous spring. But before their jubilee had ceased there came the knight, more blazing with wrath than a burning log, and making as much noise as if he were chasing a lusty stag. As soon as they espied each other they rushed together and displayed the mortal hate they bore. Each one carried a stiff, stout lance, with which they dealt such mighty blows that they pierced the shields about their necks, and cut the meshes of their hauberks; their lances are splintered and sprung, while the fragments are cast high in air. Then each attacks the other with his sword, and in the strife they cut the

straps of the shields away, and cut the shields all to bits from end to end, so that the shreds hang down, no longer serving as covering or defense; for they have so split them up that they bring down the gleaming blades upon their sides, their arms, and hips. Fierce, indeed, is their assault; yet they do not budge from their standing-place any more than would two blocks of stone. Never were there two knights so intent upon each other's death. They are careful not to waste their blows, but lay them on as best they may: they strike and bend their helmets, and they send the meshes of their hauberks flying so, that they draw not a little blood, for the hauberks are so hot with their body's heat that they hardly serve as more protection than a coat. As they drive the sword-point at the face, it is marvelous that so fierce and bitter a strife should last so long. But both are possessed of such courage that one would not for aught retreat a foot before his adversary until he had wounded him to death. Yet, in this respect they were very honorable — in not trying or deigning to strike or harm their steeds in any way; but they sat astride their steeds without putting foot to earth, which made the fight more elegant. At last my lord Yvain crushed the helmet of the knight, whom the blow stunned and made so faint that he swooned away, never having received such a cruel blow before. Beneath his kerchief his head was split to the very brains, so that the meshes of his bright hauberk were stained with the brains and blood, all of which caused him such intense pain that his heart almost ceased to beat. He had good reason then to flee, for he felt that he had a mortal wound, and that further resistance would not avail. With this thought in mind he quickly made his escape toward his town, where the bridge was lowered and the gate quickly opened for him; meanwhile my lord Yvain at once spurs after him at topmost speed. As a gerfalcon swoops upon a crane when he sees him rising from afar, and then draws so near to him that he is about to seize him, yet misses him, so flees the knight, with Yvain pressing him so close that he can almost throw his arm about him, and yet cannot quite come up with him, though he is so close that he can hear him groan for the pain he feels. While the one exerts himself in flight the other strives in pursuit of him, fearing to have wasted his effort unless he takes him alive or dead; for he still recalls the mocking words which my lord Kay had addressed to him. He had not yet carried out the pledge which he had given to his cousin; nor will they believe his word unless he returns with the evidence. The knight led him a rapid chase to the gate of his town, where they entered in; but finding no man or woman in the streets through which they passed, they both rode swiftly on till they came to the palace-gate.

#### YVAIN ENTERS THE CASTLE

The gate was very high and wide, yet it had such a narrow entrance-way that two men or two horses could scarcely enter abreast or pass without inter-

ference or great difficulty; for it was constructed just like a trap which is set for the rat on mischief bent, and which has a blade above ready to fall and strike and catch, and which is suddenly released whenever anything, however gently, comes in contact with the spring. In like fashion, beneath the gate there were two springs connected with a portcullis up above, edged with iron and very sharp. If anything stepped upon this contrivance the gate descended from above, and whoever below was struck by the gate was caught and mangled. Precisely in the middle the passage lay as narrow as if it were a beaten track. Straight through it exactly the knight rushed on, with my lord Yvain madly following him apace, and so close to him that he held him by the saddle-bow behind. It was well for him that he was stretched forward, for had it not been for this piece of luck he would have been cut quite through; for his horse stepped upon the wooden spring which kept the portcullis in place. Like a hellish devil the gate dropped down, catching the saddle and the horse's haunches, which it cut off clean. But, thank God, my lord Yvain was only slightly touched when it grazed his back so closely that it cut both his spurs off even with his heels. And while he thus fell in dismay, the other with his mortal wound escaped him, as you now shall see. Farther on there was another gate just like the one they had just passed; through this the knight made his escape, and the gate descended behind him. Thus my lord Yvain was caught, very much concerned and discomfited as he finds himself shut in this hall-way, which was all studded with gilded nails, and whose walls were cunningly decorated with precious paints. But about nothing was he so worried as not to know what had become of the knight. While he was in this narrow place, he heard open the door of a little adjoining room, and there came forth alone a fair and charming maiden who closed the door again after her. When she found my lord Yvain, at first she was sore dismayed. "Surely, sir knight," she says, "I fear you have come in an evil hour. If you are seen here, you will be all cut to pieces. For my lord is mortally wounded, and I know it is you who have been the death of him. My lady is in such a state of grief, and her people about her are crying so that they are ready to die with rage; and, moreover, they know you to be inside. But as yet their grief is such that they are unable to attend to you. The moment they come to attack you, they cannot fail to kill or capture you, as they may choose." And my lord Yvain replies to her: "If God will they shall never kill me, nor shall I fall into their hands." "No," she says, "for I shall do my utmost to assist you. It is not manly to cherish fear. So I hold you to be a man of courage, when you are not dismayed. And rest assured that if I could I would help you and treat you honorably, as you in turn would do for me. Once my lady sent me on an errand to the King's court, and I suppose I was not so experienced or courteous or so well-behaved as a maiden ought to be; at any rate, there was not a knight there who deigned to say a word to me except you alone who stand here now; but you, in your kindness, honored and

aided me. For the honor you did me then I shall now reward you. I know full well what your name is, and I recognized you at once: your name is my lord Yvain. You may be sure and certain that if you take my advice you will never be caught or treated ill. Please take this little ring of mine, which you will return when I shall have delivered you." Then she handed him the little ring and told him that its effect was like that of the bark which covers the wood so that it cannot be seen; but it must be worn so that the stone is within the palm; then he who wears the ring upon his finger need have no concern for anything; for no one, however sharp his eyes may be, will be able to see him any more than the wood which is covered by the outside bark. All this is pleasing to my lord Yvain. And when she had told him this, she led him to a seat upon a couch covered with a quilt so rich that the Duke of Austria had none such, and she told him that if he cared for something to eat she would fetch it for him; and he replied that he would gladly do so. Running quickly into the chamber, she presently returned, bringing a roasted fowl and a cake, a cloth, a full pot of good grape-wine covered with a white drinking-cup: all this she offered to him to eat. And he, who stood in need of food, very gladly ate and drank.

#### YVAIN MEETS WITH HIS LADY

Taking my lord Yvain by the hand, the damsel leads him where he will be dearly loved; but expecting to be ill received, it is not strange if he is afraid. They found the lady seated upon a red cushion. I assure you my lord Yvain was terrified upon entering the room, where he found the lady who spoke not a word to him. At this he was still more afraid, being overcome with fear at the thought that he had been betrayed. He stood there to one side so long that the damsel at last spoke up and said: "Five hundred curses upon the head of him who takes into a fair lady's chamber a knight who will not draw near, and who has neither tongue nor mouth nor sense to introduce himself." Thereupon, taking him by the arm, she thrust him forward with the words: "Come, step forward, knight, and have no fear that my lady is going to snap at you; but seek her good-will and give her yours. I will join you in your prayer that she pardon you for the death of her lord, Esclados the Red." Then my lord Yvain clasped his hands, and falling upon his knees, spoke like a lover with these words: "I will not crave your pardon, lady, but rather thank you for any treatment you may inflict on me, knowing that no act of yours could ever be distasteful to me." "Is that so, sir? And what if I think to kill you now?" "My lady, if it please you, you will never hear me speak otherwise." "I never heard of such a thing as this: that you put yourself voluntarily and absolutely within my power, without the coercion of anyone." "My lady, there is no force so strong, in truth, as that which commands me to conform absolutely to your desire. I do not fear to carry out any order you may be

pleased to give. And if I could atone for the death, which came through no fault of mine, I would do so cheerfully." "What?" says she, "come tell me now and be forgiven, if you did no wrong in killing my lord?" "Lady," he says, "if I may say it, when your lord attacked me, why was I wrong to defend myself? When a man in self-defense kills another who is trying to kill or capture him, tell me if in any way he is to blame." "No, if one looks at it aright. And I suppose it would have been no use, if I had had you put to death. But I should be glad to learn whence you derive the force that bids you to consent unquestioningly to whatever my will may dictate. I pardon you all your misdeeds and crimes. But be seated, and tell us now what is the cause of your docility?" "My lady," he says, "the impelling force comes from my heart, which is inclined toward you. My heart has fixed me in this desire." "And what prompted your heart, my fair sweet friend?" "Lady, my eyes." "And what the eyes?" "The great beauty that I see in you." "And where is beauty's fault in that?" "Lady, in this: that it makes me love." "Love? And whom?" "You, my lady dear." "I?" "Yes, truly." "Really? And how is that?" "To such an extent that my heart will not stir from you, nor is it elsewhere to be found; to such an extent that I cannot think of anything else, and I surrender myself altogether to you, whom I love more than I love myself, and for whom, if you will, I am equally ready to die or live." "And would you dare to undertake the defense of my spring for love of me?" "Yes, my lady, against the world." "Then you may know that our peace is made."

Thus they are quickly reconciled. And the lady, having previously consulted her lords, says: "We shall proceed from here to the hall where my men are assembled, who, in view of the evident need, have advised and counseled me to take a husband at their request. And I shall do so, in view of the urgent need: here and now I give myself to you; for I should not refuse to accept as lord, such a good knight and a king's son."

Now the damsel has brought about exactly what she had desired. And my lord Yvain's mastery is more complete than could be told or described; for the lady leads him away to the hall, which was full of her knights and men-at-arms. And my lord Yvain was so handsome that they all marveled to look at him, and all, rising to their feet, salute and bow to my lord Yvain, guessing well as they did so: "This is he whom my lady will select. Cursed be he who opposes him! For he seems a wonderfully fine man. Surely, the empress of Rome would be well married with such a man. Would now that he had given his word to her, and she to him, with clasped hand, and that the wedding might take place today or tomorrow." Thus they spoke among themselves.

## THE FAITHFUL LION

Pensively my lord Yvain proceeded through a deep wood, until he heard among the trees a very loud and dismal cry, and he turned in the direction whence it seemed to come. And when he had arrived upon the spot he saw in a cleared space a lion, and a serpent which held him by the tail, burning his hind quarters with flames of fire. My lord Yvain did not gape at this strange spectacle, but took counsel with himself as to which of the two he should aid. Then he says that he will succor the lion, for a treacherous and venomous creature deserves to be harmed. Now the serpent is poisonous, and fire bursts forth from its mouth — so full of wickedness is the creature. So my lord Yvain decides that he will kill the serpent first. Drawing his sword he steps forward, holding the shield before his face in order not to be harmed by the flame emerging from the creature's throat, which was larger than a pot. If the lion attacks him next, he too shall have all the fight he wishes; but whatever may happen afterwards he makes up his mind to help him now. For pity urges him and makes request that he should bear succor and aid to the gentle and noble beast. With his sword, which cuts so clean, he attacks the wicked serpent, first cleaving him through to the earth and cutting him in two, then continuing his blows until he reduces him to tiny bits. But he had to cut off a piece of the lion's tail to get at the serpent's head, which held the lion by the tail. He cut off only so much as was necessary and unavoidable. When he had set the lion free, he supposed that he would have to fight with him, and that the lion would come at him; but the lion was not minded so. Just hear now what the lion did! He acted nobly and as one well-bred; for he began to make it evident that he yielded himself to him, by standing upon his two hind feet and bowing his face to the earth, with his fore feet joined and stretched out toward him. Then he fell on his knees again, and all his face was wet with the tears of humility. My lord Yvain knows for a truth that the lion is thanking him and doing him homage because of the serpent which he had killed, thereby delivering him from death. He was greatly pleased by this episode. He cleaned his sword of the serpent's poison and filth; then he replaced it in its scabbard, and resumed his way. And the lion walks close by his side, unwilling henceforth to part from him; he will always in future accompany him, eager to serve and protect him. He goes ahead until he scents in the wind upon his way some wild beasts feeding; then hunger and his nature prompt him to seek his prey and to secure his sustenance. It is his nature so to do. He started ahead a little on the trail, thus showing his master that he had come upon and detected the odor and scent of some wild game. Then he looks at him and halts, wishing to serve his every wish, and unwilling to proceed against his will. Yvain understands by his attitude that he is showing that he awaits his pleasure. He perceives this and understands that if he holds back he will hold back too, and that if he

follows him he will seize the game which he has scented. Then he incites and cries to him, as he would do to hunting-dogs. At once the lion directed his nose to the scent which he had detected, and by which he was not deceived, for he had not gone a bow-shot when he saw in a valley a deer grazing all alone. This deer he will seize, if he has his way. And so he did, at the first spring, and then drank its blood still warm. When he had killed it he laid it upon his back and carried it back to his master, who thereupon conceived a greater affection for him, and chose him as a companion for all his life, because of the great devotion he found in him. It was near nightfall now, and it seemed good to him to spend the night there, and strip from the deer as much as he cared to eat. Beginning to carve it he splits the skin along the rib, and taking a steak from the loin he strikes from a flint a spark, which he catches in some dry brushwood; then he quickly puts his steak upon a roasting-spit to cook before the fire, and roasts it until it is quite cooked through. But there was no pleasure in the meal, for there was no bread, or wine, or salt, or cloth, or knife, or anything else. While he was eating, the lion lay at his feet; not a movement did he make, but watched him steadily until he had eaten all that he could eat of the steak. What remained of the deer the lion devoured, even to the bones. And while all night his master laid his head upon his shield to gain such rest as that afforded, the lion showed such intelligence that he kept awake, and was careful to guard the horse as it fed upon the grass, which yielded some slight nourishment.

In the morning they go off together, and the same sort of existence, it seems, as they had led that night, they two continued to lead all the ensuing week, until chance brought them to the spring beneath the pine-tree. There my lord Yvain almost lost his wits a second time, as he approached the spring, with its stone and the chapel that stood close by. So great was his distress that a thousand times he sighed "alas!" and grieving fell in a swoon; and the point of his sharp sword, falling from its scabbard, pierced the meshes of his hauberk right in the neck beside the cheek. There is not a mesh that does not spread, and the sword cuts the flesh of his neck beneath the shining mail, so that it causes the blood to start. Then the lion thinks that he sees his master and companion dead. You never heard greater grief narrated or told about anything than he now began to show. He casts himself about, and scratches and cries, and has the wish to kill himself with the sword with which he thinks his master has killed himself. Taking the sword from him with his teeth he lays it on a fallen tree, and steadies it on a trunk behind, so that it will not slip or give way, when he hurls his breast against it. His intention was nearly accomplished when his master recovered from his swoon, and the lion restrained himself as he was blindly rushing upon death, like a wild boar heedless of where he wounds himself. Thus my lord Yvain lies in a swoon beside the stone, but, on recovering, he violently reproached himself for the year during which he had overstayed his leave, and for which he had

incurred his lady's hate, and he said: "Why does this wretch not kill himself who has thus deprived himself of joy? Alas! why do I not take my life? How can I stay here and look upon what belongs to my lady? Why does the soul still tarry in my body? What is the soul doing in so miserable a frame? If it had already escaped away it would not be in such torment. It is fitting to hate and blame and despise myself, even as in fact I do. Whoever loses his bliss and contentment through fault or error of his own ought to hate himself mortally. He ought to hate and kill himself. And now, when no one is looking on, why do I thus spare myself? Why do I not take my life? Have I not seen this lion a prey to such grief on my behalf that he was on the point just now of thrusting my sword through his breast? And ought I to fear death who have changed happiness into grief? Joy is now a stranger to me. Joy? What joy is that? I shall say no more of that, for no one could speak of such a thing; and I have asked a foolish question. That was the greatest joy of all which was assured as my possession, but it endured for but a little while. Whoever loses such joy through his own misdeed is undeserving of happiness."

#### YVAIN IS RESTORED TO HIS LADY

Lunete has now done well her work; there was nothing which she had desired so much as the object which she had now attained. They had already got out for her a palfrey with an easy pace. Gladly and in a happy frame of mind Lunete mounts and rides away, until she finds beneath the pine-tree him whom she did not expect to find so near at hand. Indeed, she had thought that she would have to seek afar before discovering him. As soon as she saw him, she recognized him by the lion, and coming toward him rapidly, she dismounted upon the solid earth. And my lord Yvain recognized her as soon as he saw her, and greeted her, as she saluted him with the words: "Sire, I am very happy to have found you so near at hand." And my lord Yvain said in reply: "How is that? Were you looking for me, then?" "Yes, sire, and in all my life I have never felt so glad, for I have made my mistress promise, if she does not go back upon her word, that she will be again your lady as was once the case, and that you shall be her lord; this truth I make bold to tell." My lord Yvain was greatly elated at the news he hears, and which he had never expected to hear again. He could not sufficiently show his gratitude to her who had accomplished this for him. He kisses her eyes, and then her face, saying: "Surely, my sweet friend, I can never repay you for this service. I fear that ability and time will fail me to do you the honor and service which is your due." "Sire," she replies, "have no concern, and let not that thought worry you! For you will have an abundance of strength and time to show me and others your good-will. If I have paid this debt I owed, I am entitled to only so much gratitude as the man who borrows another's goods and then discharges the obligation. Even now I do not consider that I have

paid you the debt I owed." "Indeed you have, as God sees me, more than five hundred thousand times. Now, when you are ready, let us go. But have you told her who I am?" "No, I have not, upon my word. She knows you only by the name of 'The Knight with the Lion.'"

Thus conversing they went along, with the lion following after them, until they all three came to the town. They said not a word to any man or woman there, until they arrived where the lady was. And the lady was greatly pleased as soon as she heard that the damsel was approaching, and that she was bringing with her the lion and the knight, whom she was very anxious to meet and know and see. All clad in his arms, my lord Yvain fell at her feet upon his knees, while Lunete, who was standing by, said to her: "Raise him up, lady, and apply all your efforts and strength and skill in procuring that peace and pardon which no one in the world, except you, can secure for him." Then the lady bade him rise, and said: "He may dispose of all my power! I shall be very happy, if possible, to accomplish his wish and his desire." "Surely, my lady," Lunete replied, "I would not say it if it were not true. But all this is even more possible for you than I have said; but now I will tell you the whole truth, and you shall see: you never had and you never will have such a good friend as this gentleman. God, whose will it is that there should be unending peace and love between you and him, has caused me to find him this day so near at hand. In order to test the truth of this, I have only one thing to say: lady, dismiss the grudge you bear him! For he has no other mistress than you. This is your husband, my lord Yvain."

The lady, trembling at these words, replied: "God save me! You have caught me neatly in a trap! You will make me love, in spite of myself, a man who neither loves nor esteems me. This is a fine piece of work, and a charming way of serving me! I would rather endure the winds and the tempests all my life: And if it were not a mean and ugly thing to break one's word, he would never make his peace or be reconciled with me. This purpose would have always lurked within me, as a fire smolders in the ashes; but I do not wish to renew it now, nor do I care to refer to it, since I must be reconciled with him."

My lord Yvain hears and understands that his cause is going well, and that he will be peacefully reconciled with her. So he says: "Lady, one ought to have mercy on a sinner. I have had to pay, and dearly to pay, for my mad act. It was madness that made me stay away, and I now admit my guilt and sin. I have been bold, indeed, in daring to present myself to you; but if you will deign to keep me now, I never again shall do you any wrong." She replied: "I will surely consent to that; for if I did not do all I could to establish peace between you and me, I should be guilty of perjury. So, if you please, I grant your request." "Lady," says he, "so truly as God in this mortal life could not otherwise restore me to happiness, so may the Holy Spirit bless me five hundred times!"

Now my lord Yvain is reconciled, and you may believe that, in spite of the

trouble he has endured, he was never so happy for anything. All has turned out well at last; for he is beloved and treasured by his lady, and she by him. His troubles no longer are in his mind; for he forgets them all in the joy he feels with his precious wife. And Lunete, for her part, is happy too: all her desires are satisfied when once she had made an enduring peace between my polite lord Yvain and his sweetheart so dear and so elegant.

Thus Chrestien concludes his romance of the Knight with the Lion; for I never heard any more told of it, nor will you ever hear any further particulars, unless some one wishes to add some lies.

Translated by W. W. Comfort

# FROM 'AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE'

## 'TIS OF AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE

WHO would list to the good lay,  
Gladness of the captive gray?  
'Tis how two young lovers met.

Aucassin and Nicolette;  
Of the pains the lover bore,  
And the perils he outwore,  
For the goodness and the grace  
Of his love, so fair of face.

Sweet the song, the story sweet,  
There is no man hearkens it,  
No man living 'neath the sun,  
So outwearied, so fordome,  
Sick and woeful, worn and sad,  
But is healèd, but is glad,  
'Tis so sweet.

So say they, speak they, tell they The Tale:

How the Count Bougart of Valence made war on Count Garin of Beaucaire — war so great, so marvelous, and so mortal that never a day dawned but alway he was there, by the gates and walls and barriers of the town, with a hundred knights, and ten thousand men-at-arms, horsemen and footmen: so burned he the Count's land, and spoiled his country, and slew his men. Now, the Count Garin of Beaucaire was old and frail, and his good days were gone over. No heir had he, neither son nor daughter, save one young man only; such an one as I shall tell you. Aucassin was the name of the damoiseau:

fair was he, goodly, and great, and featly fashioned of his body and limbs. His hair was yellow, in little curls, his eyes blue-gray and laughing, his face beautiful and shapely, his nose high and well-set, and so richly seen was he in all things good, that in him was none evil at all. But so suddenly was he overtaken of Love, who is a great master, that he would not, of his will, be a knight, nor take arms, nor follow tourneys, nor do whatsoever him beseemed. Therefore his father and mother said to him: —

"Son, go take thine arms, mount thine horse, and hold thy land, and help thy men, for if they see thee among them, more stoutly will they keep in battle their lives and lands, and thine and mine."

"Father," answered Aucassin, "what are you saying now? Never may God give me aught of my desire, if I be a knight, or mount my horse, or face stour and battle wherein knights smite and are smitten again, unless thou give me Nicolette, my true love, that I love so well."

"Son," said the father, "this may not be. Let Nicolette go. A slave girl is she, out of a strange land, and the viscount of this town bought her of the Saracens, and carried her hither, and hath reared her and had her christened, and made her his god-daughter, and one day will find a young man for her, to win her bread honorably. Herein hast thou naught to make nor mend, but if a wife thou wilt have, I will give thee the daughter of a king, or a count. There is no man so rich in France, but if thou desire his daughter, thou shalt have her."

"Faith! my father," said Aucassin, "tell me where is the place so high in all the world, that Nicolette, my sweet lady and love, would not grace it well? If she were Empress of Constantinople or of Germany, or Queen of France or England, it were little enough for her; so gentle is she and courteous, and debonnaire, and compact of all good qualities."

#### IMPRISONMENT OF NICOLETTE

When Count Garin of Beaucaire knew that he would not avail to withdraw Aucassin, his son, from the love of Nicolette, he went to the viscount of the city, who was his man, and spake to him saying: — "Sir Count: away with Nicolette, thy daughter in God; cursed be the land whence she was brought into this country, for by reason of her do I lose Aucassin, that will neither be a knight, nor do aught of the things that fall to him to be done. And wit ye well," he said, "that if I might have her at my will, I would burn her in a fire, and yourself might well be sore adread."

"Sir," said the Viscount, "this is grievous to me that he comes and goes and hath speech with her. I had bought the maid at mine own charges, and nourished her, and baptized, and made her my daughter in God. Yea, I would have given her to a young man that should win her bread honorably. With this had Aucassin, thy son, naught to make or mend. But sith it is thy will

and thy pleasure, I will send her into that land and that country where never will he see her with his eyes."

"Have a heed to thyself," said the Count Garin: "thence might great evil come on thee."

So parted they each from the other. Now the Viscount was a right rich man: so had he a rich palace with a garden in face of it; in an upper chamber thereof he had Nicolette placed, with one old woman to keep her company, and in that chamber put bread and meat and wine and such things as were needful. Then he had the door sealed, that none might come in or go forth, save that there was one window, over against the garden, and quite strait, through which came to them a little air

*Here singeth one:—*

Nicolette as ye heard tell  
 Prisoned is within a cell  
 That is painted wondrously  
 With colors of a far countrie.  
 At the window of marble wrought,  
 There the maiden stood in thought,  
 With straight brows and yellow hair,  
 Never saw ye fairer fair!  
 On the wood she gazed below,  
 And she saw the roses blow,  
 Heard the birds sing loud and low,  
 Therefore spoke she woefully:  
 "Ah me, wherefore do I lie  
 Here in prison wrongfully?  
 Aucassin, my love, my knight,  
 Am I not thy heart's delight?  
 Thou that lovest me aright!  
 'Tis for thee that I must dwell  
 In this vaulted chamber cell,  
 Hard beset and all alone!  
 By our Lady Mary's Son  
 Here no longer will I wonn,  
 If I may flee!"

#### AUCASSIN AND THE VISCOUNT

[*The Viscount speaks first.*]

"Plentiful lack of comfort hadst thou got thereby; for in Hell would thy soul have lain while the world endures, and into Paradise wouldst thou have entered never."

"In Paradise what have I to win? Therein I seek not to enter, but only to have Nicolette, my sweet lady that I love so well. For into Paradise go none but such folk as I shall tell thee now: Thither go these same old priests; and halt old men and maimed, who all day and night cower continually before the altars, and in these old crypts; and such folks as wear old amices, and old clouted frocks, and naked folks and shoeless, and those covered with sores, who perish of hunger and thirst, and of cold, and of wretchedness. These be they that go into Paradise; with them have I naught to make. But into Hell would I fain go; for into Hell fare the goodly clerks, and goodly knights that fall in tourneys and great wars, and stout men-at-arms, and the free men. With these would I liefly go. And thither pass the sweet ladies and courteous, that have two lovers, or three, and their lords also thereto. Thither goes the gold, and the silver, and fur of vair, and fur of gris; and there too go the harpers, and minstrels, and the kings of this world. With these I would gladly go, let me but have with me Nicolette, my sweetest lady."

#### AUCASSIN CAPTURES COUNT BOUGART

The damoiseau was tall and strong, and the horse whereon he sat was right eager. And he laid hand to sword, and fell a-smiting to right and left, and smote through helm and nasal, and arm, and clenched hand, making a murder about him, like a wild boar when hounds fall on him in the forest, even till he struck down ten knights, and seven he hurt; and straightway he hurled out of the press, and rode back again at full speed, sword in hand. Count Bougart of Valence heard it said that they were eager to hang Aucassin, his enemy, so he came into that place and Aucassin was ware of him. He gat his sword into his hand, and struck at his helm with such a stroke that it drave it down on his head, and he being stunned, fell groveling. And Aucassin laid hands on him, and caught him by the nasal of his helmet, and gave him up to his father.

"Father," quoth Aucassin, "lo, here is your mortal foe, who hath so warred on you and done you such evil. Full twenty months did this war endure, and might not be ended by man."

"Fair son," said his father, "thy feats of youth shouldst thou do, and not seek after folly."

"Father," said Aucassin, "sermon me no sermons, but fulfil my covenant."

"Ha! what covenant, fair son?"

"What, father! hast thou forgotten it? By mine own head, whosoever forgets, will I not forget it, so much it hath me at heart. Didst thou not covenant with me when I took up arms, and went into the stour, that if God brought me back safe and sound, thou wouldst let me see Nicolette, my sweet lady, even so long that I may have of her two words or three, and one kiss? So didst thou covenant, and my mind is that thou keep thy word."

"I?" quoth the father; "God forsake me when I keep this covenant! Nay, if she were here, I would have burned her in the fire, and thou shouldst be sore adread."

#### THE LOVERS' MEETING

Aucassin was cast into prison as ye have heard tell, and Nicolette, of her part, was in the chamber. Now it was summer-time, the month of May, when days are warm, and long, and clear, and the nights still and serene. Nicolette lay one night on her bed, and saw the moon shine clear through a window, and heard the nightingale sing in the garden, and she minded her of Aucassin her friend, whom she loved so well. Then fell she to thoughts of Count Garin of Beaucaire, that he hated her to death; and therefore deemed she that there she would no longer abide, for that, if she were told of, and the Count knew where she lay, an ill death he would make her die. She saw that the old woman was sleeping who held her company. Then she arose, and clad her in a mantle of silk she had by her, very goodly, and took sheets of the bed and towels and knotted one to the other, and made therewith a cord as long as she might, and knotted it to a pillar in the window, and let herself slip down into the garden; then caught up her raiment in both hands, behind and before, and kilted up her kirtle, because of the dew that she saw lying deep on the grass, and so went on her way down through the garden.

Her locks were yellow and curled, her eyes blue-gray and smiling, her face featly fashioned, the nose high and fairly set, the lips more red than cherry or rose in time of summer, her teeth white and small; and her breasts so firm that they bore up the folds of her bodice as they had been two walnuts; so slim was she in the waist that your two hands might have clipped her; and the daisy flowers that brake beneath her as she went tiptoe, and that bent above her instep, seemed black against her feet and ankles, so white was the maiden. She came to the postern-gate, and unbarred it, and went out through the streets of Beaucaire, keeping always on the shadowy side, for the moon was shining right clear, and so wandered she till she came to the tower where her lover lay. The tower was flanked with pillars, and she cowered under one of them, wrapped in her mantle. Then thrust she her head through a crevice of the tower, that was old and worn, and heard Aucassin, who was weeping within, and making dole and lament for the sweet friend he loved so well. And when she had listened to him some time she began to say: —

*Here one singeth: —*

Nicolette, the bright of brow,  
On a pillar leanèd now,  
All Aucassin's wail did hear  
For his love that was so dear,

Then the maid spake low and clear: —  
 "Gentle knight, withouten fear,  
 Little good befalleth thee,  
 Little help of sigh or tear.  
 Ne'er shalt thou have joy of me.  
 Never shalt thou win me; still  
 Am I held in evil will  
 Of thy father and thy kin.  
 Therefore must I cross the sea,  
 And another land must win."  
 Then she cut her curls of gold,  
 Cast them in the dungeon hold,  
 Aucassin doth clasp them there,  
 Kiss'th the curls that were so fair,  
 Them doth in his bosom bear,  
 Then he wept, e'en as of old,  
 All for his love!

Thus say they, speak they, tell they The Tale.

When Aucassin heard Nicolette say that she would pass into a far country, he was all in wrath.

"Fair, sweet friend," quoth he, "thou shalt not go, for then wouldst thou be my death. And the first man that saw thee and had the might withal, would take thee straightway into his bed to be his leman. And once thou camest into a man's bed, and that bed not mine, wit ye well that I would not tarry till I had found a knife to pierce my heart and slay myself. Nay, verily, wait so long I would not; but would hurl myself so far as I might see a wall, or a black stone, and I would dash my head against it so mightily that the eyes would start and my brain burst. Rather would I die even such a death than know that thou hadst lain in a man's bed, and that bed not mine."

"Aucassin," she said, "I trow thou lovest me not as much as thou sayest, but I love thee more than thou lovest me."

"Ah, fair, sweet friend," said Aucassin, "it may not be that thou shouldest love me even as I love thee. Woman may not love man as man loves woman; for a woman's love lies in her eye, and the bud of her breast, and her foot's tiptoe, but the love of a man is in his heart planted, whence it can never issue forth and pass away."

Now when Aucassin and Nicolette were holding this parley together, the town's watchmen were coming down a street, with swords drawn beneath their cloaks, for Count Garin had charged them that if they should take her, they should slay her. But the sentinel that was on the tower saw them coming, and heard them speaking of Nicolette as they went, and threatening to slay her.

"God," quoth he, "this were great pity to slay so fair a maid! Right great charity it were if I could say aught to her, and they perceive it not, and she should be on her guard against them, for if they slay her, then were Aucassin, my damoiseau, dead, and that were great pity."

*Here one singeth: —*

Valiant was the sentinel,  
 Courteous, kind, and practised well,  
 So a song did sing and tell,  
 Of the peril that befell.  
 "Maiden fair that lingerest here,  
 Gentle maid of merry cheer,  
 Hair of gold, and eyes as clear  
 As the water in a mere,  
 Thou, meseems, hast spoken word  
 To thy lover and thy lord,  
 That would die for thee, his dear;  
 Now beware the ill accord  
 Of the cloaked men of the sword:  
 These have sworn, and keep their word,  
 They will put thee to the sword  
 Save thou take heed! "

#### NICOLETTE BUILDS HER LODGE

Nicolette, the bright of brow,  
 From the shepherds doth she pass  
 All below the blossomed bough  
 Where an ancient way there was,  
 Overgrown and choked with grass,  
 Till she found the cross-roads where  
 Seven paths do all way fare;  
 Then she deemeth she will try,  
 Should her lover pass thereby,  
 If he love her loyally.  
 So she gathered white lilies,  
 Oak-leaf, that in greenwood is,  
 Leaves of many a branch, iwis,  
 Therewith built a lodge of green,  
 Goodlier was never seen.  
 Swore by God, who may not lie:  
 "If my love the lodge should spy,  
 He will rest a while thereby

If he love me loyally."  
Thus his faith she deemed to try,  
"Or I love him not, not I,  
Nor he loves me!"

AUCASSIN, SEEKING NICOLETTE, COMES UPON A COWHERD

Aucassin fared through the forest from path to path after Nicolette, and his horse bare him furiously. Think ye not that the thorns him spared, nor the briers, nay, not so, but tare his raiment, that scarce a knot might be tied with the soundest part thereof, and the blood spurted from his arms, and flanks, and legs, in forty places, or thirty, so that behind the Childe men might follow on the track of his blood in the grass. But so much he went in thoughts of Nicolette, his lady sweet, that he felt no pain nor torment, and all the day hurled through the forest in this fashion nor heard no word of her. And when he saw vespers draw nigh, he began to weep for that he found her not. All down an old road, and grass-grown, he fared, when anon, looking along the way before him, he saw such an one as I shall tell you. Tall was he, and great of growth, ugly and hideous: his head huge, and blacker than charcoal, and more than the breadth of a hand between his two eyes; and he had great cheeks, and a big nose and flat, big nostrils and wide, and thick lips redder than steak, and great teeth yellow and ugly, and he was shod with hosen and shoon of ox-hide, bound with cords of bark up over the knee, and all about him a great cloak two-fold; and he leaned upon a grievous cudgel, and Aucassin came unto him, and was afraid when he beheld him.

AUCASSIN FINDS NICOLETTE'S LODGE

So they parted from each other, and Aucassin rode on; the night was fair and still, and so long he went that he came to the lodge of boughs that Nicolette had builded and woven within and without, over and under, with flowers, and it was the fairest lodge that might be seen. When Aucassin was ware of it, he stopped suddenly, and the light of the moon fell therein.

"Forsooth!" quoth Aucassin, "here was Nicolette, my sweet lady, and this lodge builded she with her fair hands. For the sweetness of it, and for love of her, will I now alight, and rest here this night long."

He drew forth his foot from the stirrup to alight, and the steed was great and tall. He dreamed so much on Nicolette, his right sweet friend, that he fell heavily upon a stone, and drave his shoulder out of its place. Then knew he that he was hurt sore; nathless he bore him with that force he might, and fastened his horse with the other hand to a thorn. Then turned he on his side, and crept backwise into the lodge of boughs. And he looked through a gap in the lodge and saw the stars in heaven, and one that was brighter than the rest; so began he to say: —

*Here one singeth: —*

“Star, that I from far behold,  
 Star the moon calls to her fold,  
 Nicolette with thee doth dwell,  
 My sweet love, with locks of gold.  
 God would have her dwell afar,  
 Dwell with him for evening star.  
 Would to God, whate’er befell,  
 Would that with her I might dwell.  
 I would clip her close and strait;  
 Nay, were I of much estate,  
 Some king’s son desirable,  
 Worthy she to be my mate,  
 Me to kiss and clip me well,  
 Sister, sweet friend!”

Thus speak they, say they, tell they The Tale.

When Nicolette heard Aucassin, she came to him, for she was not far away. She passed within the lodge, and threw her arms about his neck, clipped him and kissed him.

“Fair, sweet friend, welcome be thou!”

“And thou, fair, sweet love, be thou welcome!”

So either kissed and clipped the other, and fair joy was them between.

“Ha! sweet love,” quoth Aucassin, “but now was I sore hurt, and my shoulder wried, but I take no heed of it, nor have no hurt therefrom, since I have thee.”

Right so felt she his shoulder and found it was wried from its place. And she so handled it with her white hands, and so wrought in her surgery, that by God’s will who loveth lovers, it went back into its place. Then took she flowers, and fresh grass, and leaves green, and bound them on the hurt with a strip of her smock, and he was all healed.

#### NICOLETTE SAILS TO PROVENCE

When all they of the court heard her speak thus, that she was daughter to the king of Carthage, they knew well that she spake truly; so made they great joy of her, and led her to the castle with great honor, as a king’s daughter. And they would have given her to her lord a king of Paynim, but she had no mind to marry. There dwelt she three days or four. And she considered by what device she might seek for Aucassin. Then she got her a viol, and learned to play on it; till they would have married her one day to a rich king of Paynim, and she stole forth by night, and came to the seaport, and

dwelt with a poor woman thereby. Then took she a certain herb, and therewith smeared her head and her face, till she was all brown and stained. And she had a coat, and mantle, and smock, and breeches made, and attired herself as if she had been a minstrel. So took she the viol and went to a mariner, and so wrought on him that he took her aboard his vessel. Then hoisted they sail, and fared on the high seas even till they came to the land of Provence. And Nicolette went forth and took the viol, and went playing through all the country, even till she came to the castle of Beaucaire, where Aucassin was.

*Here singeth one: —*

At Beaucaire below the tower  
 Sat Aucassin on an hour,  
 Heard the bird, and watched the flower,  
 With his barons him beside.  
 Then came on him in that tide  
 The sweet influence of love  
 And the memory thereof;  
 Thought of Nicolette the fair,  
 And the dainty face of her  
 He had loved so many years.  
 Then was he in dule and tears!  
 Even then came Nicolette;  
 On the stair a foot she set,  
 And she drew the viol bow  
 O'er the strings and chanted so: —  
 "Listen, lords and knights, to me,  
 Lords of high or low degree,  
 To my story list will ye  
 All of Aucassin and her  
 That was Nicolette the fair?  
 And their love was long to tell;  
 Deep woods through he sought her well;  
 Paynims took them on a day  
 In Torelore, and bound they lay.  
 Of Aucassin naught know we,  
 But fair Nicolette the free  
     Now in Carthage doth she dwell;  
     There her father loves her well,  
 Who is king of that countrie.  
 Her a husband hath he found,  
 Paynim lord that serves Mahound;  
 Ne'er with him the maid will go,  
 For she loves a damoiseau,

Aucassin, that ye may know,  
 Swears to God that never mo  
 With a lover will she go  
 Save with him she loveth so  
 In long desire."

Translated by Andrew Lang (with slight alterations)

## MARIE DE FRANCE

### THE LAY OF THE TWO LOVERS

**O**NCE upon a time there lived in Normandy two lovers, who were passing fond, and were brought by Love to Death. The story of their love was bruited so abroad, that the Bretons made a song in their own tongue, and named this song the Lay of the Two Lovers.

In Neustria — that men call Normandy — there is verily a high and marvelously great mountain, where lie the relics of the Two Children. Near this high place the king of those parts caused to be built a certain fair and cunning city, and since he was lord of the Pistrians, it was known as Pistres. The town yet endures, with its towers and houses, to bear witness to the truth; moreover the country thereabouts is known to us all as the Valley of Pistres.

This king had one fair daughter, a damsel sweet of face and gracious of manner, very near to her father's heart, since he had lost his queen. The maiden increased in years and favor, but he took no heed to her trothing, so that men — yea, even his own people — blamed him greatly for this thing. When the king heard thereof he was passing heavy and dolent, and considered within himself how he might be delivered from his grief. So then, that none should carry off his child, he caused it to be proclaimed, both far and near, by script and trumpet, that he alone should wed the maid, who would bear her in his arms to the pinnacle of the great and perilous mountain, and that without rest or stay. When this news was noised about the country, many came upon the quest. But strive as they would they might not enforce themselves more than they were able. However mighty they were of body, at the last they failed upon the mountain, and fell with their burthen to the ground. Thus, for a while, was none so bold as to seek the high princess.

Now in this country lived a squire, son to a certain count of that realm, seemly of semblance and courteous, and right desirous to win that prize, which was so coveted of all. He was a welcome guest at the court, and the king talked with him very willingly. This squire had set his heart upon the daughter of the king, and many a time spoke in her ear, praying her to give him again

the love he had bestowed upon her. So seeing him brave and courteous, she esteemed him for the gifts which gained him the favor of the king, and they loved together in their youth. But they hid this matter from all about the court. This thing was very grievous to them, but the damoiseau thought within himself that it were good to bear the pains he knew, rather than to seek out others that might prove sharper still. Yet in the end, altogether distraught by love, this prudent varlet sought his friend, and showed her his case, saying that he urgently required of her that she would flee with him, for no longer could he endure the weariness of his days. Should he ask her of the king, well he knew that by reason of his love he would refuse the gift, save he bore her in his arms up the steep mount. Then the maiden made answer to her lover, and said:

"Fair friend, well I know you may not carry me to that high place. Moreover should we take to flight, my father would suffer wrath and sorrow beyond measure, and go heavily all his days. Certainly my love is too fond to plague him thus, and we must seek another counsel, for this is not to my heart. Harken well. I have kindred in Salerno, of rich estate. For more than thirty years my aunt has studied there the art of medicine, and knows the secret gift of every root and herb. If you hasten to her, bearing letters from me, and show her your adventure, certainly she will find counsel and cure. Doubt not that she will discover some cunning simple, that will strengthen your body, as well as comfort your heart. Then return to this realm with your potion, and ask me at my father's hand. He will deem you but a stripling, and set forth the terms of his bargain, that to him alone shall I be given who knows how to climb the perilous mountain, without pause or rest, bearing his lady between his arms."

When the varlet heard this cunning counsel of the maiden, he rejoiced greatly, and thanking her sweetly for her rede, craved permission to depart. He returned to his own home, and gathering together a goodly store of silken cloths most precious, he bestowed his gear upon the pack horses, and made him ready for the road. So with a little company of men, mounted on swift palfreys, and most privy to his mind, he arrived at Salerno. Now the squire made no long stay at his lodging; but as soon as he might, went to the damsel's kindred to open out his mind. He delivered to the aunt the letters he carried from his friend, and bewailed their evil case. When the dame had read these letters with him, line by line, she charged him to lodge with her awhile, till she might do according to his wish. So by her sorceries, and for the love of her maid, she brewed such a potion that no man, however wearied and outworn, but by drinking this philter, would not be refreshed in heart and blood and bones. Such virtue had this medicine, directly it were drunken. This simple she poured within a little flacket, and gave it to the varlet, who received the gift with great joy and delight, and returned swiftly to his own land.

The varlet made no long sojourn in his home. He repaired straightway to the court, and seeking out the king, required of him his fair daughter in marriage, promising, for his part, that were she given him, he would bear her in his arms to the summit of the mount. The king was no wise wrath at his presumption. He smiled rather at his folly, for how should one so young and slender succeed in a business wherein so many mighty men had failed. Therefore he appointed a certain day for this judgment. Moreover he caused letters to be written to his vassals and his friends — passing none by — bidding them to see the end of this adventure. Yea, with public cry and sound of trumpet he bade all who would, come to behold the stripling carry his fair daughter to the pinnacle of the mountain. And from every region round about men came to learn the issue of this thing. But for her part the fair maiden did all that she was able to bring her love to a good end. Ever was it fast day and fleshless day with her, so that by any means she might lighten the burden that her friend must carry in his arms.

Now on the appointed day this young dansellon came very early to the appointed place, bringing the flasket with him. When the great company were fully met together, the king led forth his daughter before them; and all might see that she was arrayed in nothing but her smock. The varlet took the maiden in his arms, but first he gave her the flask with the precious brewage to carry, since for pride he might not endure to drink therefrom, save at utmost peril. The squire set forth at a great pace, and climbed briskly till he was halfway up the mount. Because of the joy he had in clasping his burthen, he gave no thought to the potion. But she — she knew the strength was failing in his heart.

"Fair friend," said she, "well I know that you tire: drink now, I pray you, of the flasket, and so shall your manhood come again at need."

But the varlet answered:

"Fair love, my heart is full of courage; nor for any reason will I pause, so long as I can hold upon my way. It is the noise of all this folk — the tumult and the shouting — that makes my steps uncertain. Their cries distress me, I do not dare to stand."

But when two-thirds of the course was won, the grasshopper would have tripped him off his feet. Urgently and often the maiden prayed him, saying:

"Fair friend, drink now of thy cordial."

But he would neither hear, nor give credence to her words. A mighty anguish filled his bosom. He climbed upon the summit of the mountain, and pained himself grievously to bring his journey to an end. This he might not do. He reeled and fell, nor could he rise again, for the heart had burst within his breast.

When the maiden saw her lover's piteous plight, she deemed that he had swooned by reason of his pain. She kneeled hastily at his side, and put the enchanted brewage to his lips, but he could neither drink nor speak, for he

was dead as I have told you. She bewailed his evil lot, with many shrill cries, and flung the useless flacket far away. The precious potion bestrewed the ground, making a garden of that desolate place. For many saving herbs have been found there since that day by the simple folk of that country, which from the magic philter derived all their virtue.

But when the maiden knew that her lover was dead, she made such wondrous sorrow, as no man had ever seen. She kissed his eyes and mouth, and falling upon his body, took him in her arms, and pressed him closely to her breast. There was no heart so hard as not to be touched by her sorrow; for in this fashion died a dame, who was fair and sweet and gracious, beyond the wont of the daughters of men.

Now the king and his company, since these two lovers came not again, presently climbed the mountain to learn their end. But when the king came upon them lifeless, and fast in that embrace, incontinent he fell to the ground, bereft of sense. After his speech had returned to him, he was passing heavy, and lamented their doleful case, and thus did all his people with him.

Three days they kept the bodies of these two fair children from earth, with uncovered face. On the third day they sealed them fast in a goodly coffin of marble, and by the counsel of ail men, laid them softly to rest on that mountain where they died. Then they departed from them, and left them together alone.

Since this adventure of the Two Children this hill is known as the Mountain of the Two Lovers, and their story being bruited abroad, the Breton folk have made a Lay thereof, even as I have rehearsed before you.

Translated by Eugene Mason

## JEAN DE MEUNG

### WHAT MAKES THE GENTLEMAN

From the Second Part of the 'Romance of the Rose,' lines 19349-19720

**M**OREOVER 'tis with power intense  
 The heavens work out their influence  
 Alike o'er earth, and air, and sea.  
 Great comets cause they, which are free  
 To speed their flames across the sky  
 Unhindered, till they waste and die,  
 And of their portents many a tale  
 Men tell, but all of small avail.  
 The deaths of princes they declare,

Cry some, who rash predictions dare,  
 But comets in good truth no more  
 Watch over deaths of kings than o'er  
 The passing of poor peasants, nay,  
 Of neither heed nor care have they.  
 But this most certainly we know,  
 That all around the world they go  
 As they the ordering may find  
 Of climates, beasts, and human kind,  
 Which 'neath the influence and power  
 Are of such stars as rule the hour,  
 Or planets which bestud the heaven  
 And all earth's doings guide and leaven,  
 Controlling things men count as chance  
 With hidden, deep significance,  
 And thus the world's affairs arrange,  
 Subjecting all to many a change.

I say not that a king should be  
 Esteemed a rich man more than he  
 Who goeth barefoot by the way,  
 Earning his bread from day to day;  
 For 'tis content that makes riches,  
 And avarice brings but wretchedness.  
 And whether king, or bare of store,  
 But poor is he who craveth more;  
 And written in a certain book,  
 We find that kings and peasants look  
 Alike, for Ptolemy made note  
 Of this when Almagest he wrote,  
 Saying: Who would a picture see  
 Right well, should at some distance be,  
 For all the faults we see anear,  
 Which at a distance disappear,  
 And things which from afar we deem  
 Most fair, but rudely handles seem  
 When closely viewed.

So, powerful friends  
 Oft willing seem to serve one's ends,  
 When little known, but who should try  
 Them hand to hand, will speedily  
 Discovery make how vain it were

Favors to ask, and lest he fare  
But evilwise, will hesitate  
Rashly to tempt an evil fate.  
All this is but what Horace saith  
Concerning great men's truth and faith.

No! No! the heavenly powers deign not  
More to note deaths of kings I wot,  
Than those of honest churls, nor are  
Kings' bodies dead, one dab of tar  
More worth than those of clerk and squire,  
Or honest men who work for hire;  
Each cries alike on gossip's knee  
Newborn — what difference can we see?  
Naked and impotent are all,  
High-born or peasant, great and small:  
That human nature is throughout  
The whole world equal, none can doubt.  
'Tis fickle Fortune doth confer  
Her gifts whereso it pleaseth her,  
And as she gives, so takes away,  
Uncertain she, from day to day,  
Freely she gives, and doth reclaim  
As freely, recking nought men's blame.  
And if some man, with pride elate,  
Should vow that I herein misstate  
The case, declaring that he can  
Lay claim to name of gentleman,  
As people phrase it, seen that he  
Long lineage boasts and blazonry,  
Above rude folk who are but born  
To till the earth, with labor worn,  
I should reply that, 'tis alone  
By virtue noblemen are known,  
And only he should men count base  
In whom fair virtue giveth place  
To hideous vice. An upright heart  
Doth true nobility impart,  
But mere nobility of birth  
I reckon as of little worth.  
The nobleman who lives today,  
Before his fellows should display  
Those qualities which his forebears

Won bright renown in far-off years.  
 Now from the world's vain show they're gone,  
 Leaving unto their heirs, alone  
 Their wealth, but with them bearing hence  
 Their nobleness and excellence  
 Of soul, and so their sons remain  
 Inheritors of nought but vain  
 Titles and wealth — unless they buy  
 With noble deeds nobility.

Much fairer chance the learned have  
 To prove them noble, wise, and suave  
 (The wherefore will I straightway show),  
 Than mighty kings and lords, who know  
 No whit of books, for every clerk  
 Who studieth scriptures needs must mark  
 The wit and wisdom taught therein,  
 And deeply pondering them may win  
 Such knowledge as will lead him straight,  
 Eschewing ill, to heaven's fair gate.  
 For whatsoe'er the world hath seen  
 Of good or ill, inscribed hath been  
 In chronicles of bygone times,  
 Which memory keep of basest crimes,  
 While close beside them may be read  
 The glorious deeds by heroes sped.

Briefly, a man from books may learn  
 Virtue to love and vice to spurn.  
 Noble each clerk is, or should be  
 (Whether a learned master he  
 Or scholar), and of gracious mind,  
 Noble and courteous, sweet, and kind;  
 For if they be not so, then they  
 Thereby but evil hearts betray.  
 Advantage scholars have above  
 Rude men who chase and woodcraft love,  
 And therefore none are valued less  
 Than clerks in whom lacks gentleness,  
 Since they, with consciousness awake  
 To virtue, her fair paths forsake,  
 And clerks who wed their souls to vice  
 Will, in the Lord of Paradise,

When comes the dreadful dooming day,  
Find sterner judge than people lay,  
Who ne'er in books were trained to read  
How vice to shun and virtue speed.  
And though a king should chance to be  
A man well lettered, yet would he  
Have far less time, amid state cares,  
To read, than one who cassock wears  
In cloistered cell.

And therefore less  
Princes oft gain of true noblesse,  
Than studious monk or well-read clerk,  
Who scriptures may digest and mark  
Unhindered.

If men fain would learn  
How they for high noblesse may earn  
Distinction, with this golden lore  
Their minds and memories let them store:

Whoso would practise true noblesse  
Must cast off pride and idleness,  
Himself to arms or study give,  
And pure of soul and spirit live.  
In sweet humility attired,  
His heart should be with kindness fired  
Toward every man, except he meets  
Some foe who scornfully entreats  
His gentleness. In every way  
To dames and damsels let him pay  
Due honor, yet affiance great  
Repose not in them lest too late  
He find, alas! that cruel scorn  
Is all the fruit his grace hath borne.  
Honor such men should find, and fame  
Be theirs, unstained or scathed by blame,  
And they alone win praising wide,  
By name of Noble dignified.  
A knight should never shame his sword,  
Nor ever let unseemly word  
Escape his lips, of honor fain  
And scorning sloth, like good Gawain,  
Or Robert of Artois, whose ways  
Were noble from his cradle days,

Through all his life, for largess free  
 Renowned, and unstained chivalry,  
 And in the field of honor great  
 Ere yet his years reached man's estate.  
 A knight who holds him in such guise,  
 Noble and valiant, pure and wise,  
 Beloved shall be where'er he go,  
 The good man's friend, the recreant's foe.

And that man eke should honored be  
 Who spends his lifedays patiently  
 In study, and, by learning led,  
 In virtue's paths delights to tread.  
 And gathered from the days of yore  
 Of bright examples many a score,  
 Could I recount, but sorely doubt  
 To tire you ere my tale ran out.  
 In olden days — good times were then,  
 Kings, emperors, and great noblemen  
 To learned clerks much honor showed,  
 And goodly gifts on them bestowed.  
 To poets who life's burdens leaven  
 Were villas and fair gardens given.  
 Vergil, the sweet-voiced, was apaid  
 Right generously, and master made  
 Of beauteous Naples, city fair,  
 Which Lavardins and Paris dare  
 Not vie with. In Calabria's plains  
 Had Ennius gardens, for the pains  
 Wherewith he wrought sweet verse — but no,  
 'Twere vain o'er all the roll to go;  
 With names could I fill many a page  
 Of men who, though their lineage  
 Was lowly, yet to fame did mount,  
 By genius, above king or count,  
 And worthily were held to be  
 The flower of all nobility.  
 But those good days are dead, alas!  
 And now may men a lifetime pass  
 In studying deep philosophy,  
 Faring therefor o'er land and sea  
 In poverty and misery great,  
 Begging their bread at Dives' gate,  
 Barefooted, clad in threadbare gown,

Wending their way from town to town,  
 Esteemed by kings not worth a hen,  
 Although far worthier gentlemen,  
 (May God preserve me from the shivers)  
 Than sparks who daily fill their quivers  
 To shoot poor hares, or those one sees  
 'Stablished in princely palaces.

And he who claimeth to inherit  
 Noblesse, though void himself of merit,  
 By forebears won in earlier day,  
 Shall he be counted noble? Nay!  
 A common wretch should he be deemed,  
 Far less by honest men esteemed,  
 Than had he been base beggar-born.  
 To bow to such an one I'd scorn,  
 Although he chanced to be the son  
 Of Alexander great, who won,  
 By bold adventure, empire o'er  
 The wide-stretched earth, from shore to shore.  
 And when his arms had brought alow  
 Beneath his rule each vigorous foe,  
 And many a tribe of timorous folk  
 Had tamely bent beneath his yoke,  
 Grew then to vanity so great  
 That earth proved incommensurate  
 With his desires, and he exclaimed  
 That, all too narrowly was framed  
 The world for him, and so amain,  
 His soul of mightier conquests fain,  
 He smote upon the gates of hell,  
 Yearning the powers thereof to quell.  
 And when the gods of Hades heard  
 His stroke alarm their bosoms stirred,  
 Lest this was He who by the Cross  
 Should compensate for Adam's loss,  
 Break down hell's bars, subdue their pride,  
 And heaven's bright portals open wide,  
 Delivering those from hell for whom  
 On Calvary He suffered doom.

Let us suppose, though ne'er it can  
 So happen, that no gentleman  
 I ever formed, nor e'er allowed

Great men to rise from out the crowd,  
 Who then could claim nobility?  
 Therefore to all it clear must be,  
 Who care hereof to face the truth,  
 That no nobility, forsooth,  
 Can any boast, unless he strives  
 To emulate the noble lives  
 Of his forebears. And this to do  
 Should be the aim of all those who  
 Would fain be stamped with honor's seal,  
 Yet scorn from ancestors to steal  
 A glory which they merit not.  
 For all men will agree, I wot,  
 That nothing can confer noblesse  
 On any living man, unless  
 His hand some noble work hath done;  
 For glory by a father won  
 Can no more give his children fame  
 Than can his misdeeds shadow blame.  
 Honor to him who merits it!  
 But he who vilely spends his wit  
 In wasteful sin and harmful vice,  
 Or usury and avarice,  
 Or boastfulness and foolish pride,  
 And is in leasing double-dyed,  
 A wastrel of his goods, though he  
 Spends nought in alms or charity,  
 While in his heart all crimes abound;  
 (And of such sort, alas! are found  
 Plenteous examples, people born  
 Of parents who would hold in scorn  
 A villain deed,) unjust it were  
 That one of such a sort should share  
 In glory by his fathers won,  
 Through valiancy in days long gone:  
 He should, forsooth, be held more base  
 Than one who springs of meanest race.

And men of sense will all agree  
 That a wide gaping gulf must be  
 'Twixt those who noble actions do  
 For fair renown, and misers, who  
 Expend long days of life and health

To win and garner boundless wealth  
 With restless zeal that nought can tire.  
 For he within whose heart desire  
 Rages to bring beneath his hands  
 Great heaps of treasure, houses, lands,  
 Jewels and coin, although he hold  
 A hundred thousand marks of gold,  
 May leave his goods to whom he will.  
 But though a man his blood should spill  
 To garner honor, or should store  
 His heart abrim with learned lore,  
 Neither his valor, worth, or wit  
 Can he to well-loved heirs transmit.  
 Can one bequeath his learning? Nay —  
 Nor honor, nor renown, he may  
 Devise, but can instruction give,  
 If heirs will learn, how well to live;  
 But no man others' hearts can fire  
 With virtue if they lack desire  
 Thereto; good counsel some folk find  
 Less value than an apple-rind;  
 Much rather they, forsooth, are fain  
 Goods, lands, and chattels rich to gain.  
 Each cries: A gentleman am I!  
 Since that's the name those commonly  
 Are called by, who inherit what  
 Their ancestors by merit got,  
 The prize of wit or fair endeavor;  
 But they love hawking by the river,  
 Or following up with horse and hound  
 The merry chase, the full year round,  
 And though but idle oafs they be,  
 Pose as the flower of chivalry.  
 Such men are not of noble birth,  
 But only trade upon the worth  
 Of others, and when they appeal  
 To ancient lineage make, but steal  
 The honored name of those who won  
 Nobility in days bygone.  
 For though all men are born through me  
 Equal, straightway they wish to be  
 Of other nobleness than that  
 I give, which they, forsooth, find flat,

Although no name can be more fair  
 Than native freedom, which all bear  
 Of my free gift, and with it too  
 Reason God gave, which makes all, who,  
 As human beings draw life's breath,  
 Like gods and angels — save for death.  
 But man a mortal is, and hence  
 'Twixt God and man wide difference  
 Is set, and thus must men achieve  
 Such noblesse as they ne'er receive  
 From God or Nature. Well, I wot,  
 If one low-born inherit not  
 Fair virtue, neither doth a king  
 Or count. A far more shameful thing,  
 I hold it, if a king's son strays  
 From virtue's paths to evil ways,  
 Than if a man prove reprobate,  
 Born of a sire of low estate,  
 As shoemaker, or swineherd, or  
 Plowman, or other rustic boor.  
 More honorable, 'twere, I ween,  
 To noble Gawain, had he been  
 Son to some coward who had stayed  
 At home, of valiant deeds afraid,  
 Than if, though born of Renouard, he  
 Had shown him base and cowardly.

Translated by F. S. Ellis

## PROVENÇAL LITERATURE

THE literature written in the "language where 'yes' is 'oc'" embraces the whole sphere of intellectual life in Southern France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Provençal one may call the treatises on chivalry and science written in Catalonia by the *Doctor Illuminatus*, Raymond Lull; Provençal the most romantically conceived of the *chansons de geste*, 'Girart de Roussillon'; Provençal the delicate 'Flamenca' which some regard as the first of the modern novels in verse; Provençal the *fabliau* of the deaf-mute which Boccaccio used for a tale of the 'Decameron'; Provençal a version of that legend of Saint Paul in Hell which Dante must have had before him in planning the 'Inferno'; Provençal many an epic, history, saint's biography, miracle, many a political manifesto or lampoon, which reflect with greater or lesser raciness the multiple stirrings of life in an age which knew chivalry in its flower, which ventured its own religious Reformation, succumbed to its own Inquisition, and saw feudalism exhaust itself in the frenzy of the Crusades to make way for the nascent modern nationalities. From the point of view of the Provençal lyric it is natural to think of Provençal literature as a momentary florescence which, for some mysterious reason, faded never to return. Considered in its full scope, that literature is just a regional literature of France, flourishing exuberantly before the rise of the modern national state, and continuing, if not to flourish, at least to exist, after the rise of the modern national state. The great gap that seems to open between Arnaut Daniel in the twelfth century and Frédéric Mistral in the nineteenth century is, in the documentary sense, illusory; though the gap between these two great moments of Provençal literature, in terms of spiritual significance and influence upon the world at large, is real enough.

The peculiar glamour of romance that hovers about the medieval lyric of Southern France comes beyond a doubt from certain episodes in the lives of the troubadours themselves. The stories are familiar to everyone:

"Jauffre Rudel was a very gentle man, Prince of Blaya; and he fell enamoured of the Countess of Tripoli, without sight of her, for the much good he heard said of her by pilgrims returned out of Egypt . . . and he wrote songs of her with sweet music, though the words were not very good. And for love of her he took the Cross and put to sea; and he fell sick in the ship, and those who were with him, fearful that his end had come, took him to Tripoli to an inn, dying. And the Countess heard of this, and came to him, and took him in her arms; and he knew she was the Countess, and recovered sense, and praised God and thanked Him that He had given him

life till he should see her; and so he died in the arms of the lady; and she buried him in the House of the Templars, and that very day became a nun for the grief she had of him and of his death."

Richaut of Berbesieu "fell enamoured of the wife of Jauffre de Tonay, and she of him within the bounds of courtliness. And he made songs of his love for her . . . and when he begged her that she should have mercy on him she made answer that she would love him so far as it should be honorable in her to do so and that he should ask her to do and say no more than that which she was doing and saying. . . . And the chatelaine of a rich castle sent for Richaut and reproached the lady for her cruelty toward him . . . And she told him that if he would leave that lady and come to her, she would love him as he deserved! . . . And he did so. . . . And he came then to the second lady and asked her to do so as she had promised. . . . But she said that he was a man no woman could trust, and that he had shown as much by proving false to his first lady . . . And then was Richaut the most sorrowful man in the world, and he returned to his first lady, but she would have none of him. Whereupon withdrew he into a forest and shut himself up in a hermitage saying he would never come forth till his lady had forgiven him. And he dwelt there two years . . . and the ladies and the gentlemen of those parts, beholding his great grief and sorrowing for him, came to the lady and begged her that she have mercy on him. . . . And she said that nothing would she do till a hundred damsels and a hundred knights who had loved each other faithfully should kneel before her, their hands joined, and beg her to forgive him. And everyone heard of this: and a hundred knights and a hundred damsels made haste and came and knelt before her, their hands joined, and begged her to have mercy. And she forgave him."

It is in the train of these and many other "true" stories, suggesting a cult of ideal relations between men and women, where love is severed from sense and interest and follows its destiny in the face of fortune, that at one time or another every generation of romantically minded people turns to the poems of the troubadours.

But, in point of historical fact, the Provençal lyric hit on something new. It revealed hitherto unrecognized and unexploited aspects of human sentiment. And this was perceived even in those early days. During the larger part of the thirteenth century and the first decades of the fourteenth, the "gay science" of chivalric Provence was the fad and the fashion of the courts of Europe, especially in Italy. In Italy, indeed, during that period knowledge of the *lenga d'oc* was part of a literary man's necessary culture. Skill in poetic composition in that language was one of the insignia of literary competence; while, abroad in the cultivated public of Europe, the moods and phrases of this super-sensuous love of the Provençal troubadours became commonplaces which through the clarifications and sublimations made of them by the Italians, by Dante and Petrarch in particular, entered permanently into the

culture of the West to become part of the spiritual inheritance of the whole modern world.

Our critical vision of the poetry of Provence should not, however, be confused by the adaptations the Italians, especially the Italians of Dante's school, made of it. For the Provençalizers of the "sweet new style" in Italy, love was a wholly ethereal experience. If it ever had a basis in sense, the sensuous element was purged of materiality and selfishness by a process of moral, intellectual, and sentimental enlightenment whereby love of woman became merely an antecedent symbol of love of God; and woman herself a sexless, diaphanous creature, eventually (whatever she may have been at one time) the vehicle through which divine revelation came to men. This "literary" and wholly intellectual distortion of the Provençal mood reaches its extreme in Dante; it is not the soundest element even in Dante's art. Petrarch, for his part, is much closer to the spirit of Provençal chivalry, so far as his love of Laura is a natural, human love expressing itself in terms of a mundane *galanterie* that is shot through with a subtle vein of playfulness.

The situation in the Provençal lyric could not be more simple and natural. The troubadour loves his lady because she is a woman. He would have thought it discourteous even to suggest that he did not have a very besetting thought of her physical charms, and a physical desire proportionate. "I am not the man to aspire to her," writes Bernart of Ventadour; "but some day I may find her, sleeping (she will be pretending probably) and then I'll kiss her — and her lips will bear the bruise for a month!" "By the head of Saint Gregory," swears Guillem de Peitieu, "I shall die if I don't have her — whether indoors or out-of-doors, matters little to me." And elsewhere: "What I ask of God is that He let me live long enough to get my hands on her again!" As regards the fundamental relation between lover and lady, the courtly chivalric lyric of Provence has its roots in that medieval sex-song of popular origin which was widely diffused through Latin Europe.

But the Provençal troubadour does not linger forever, nor even for long, on this natural instinctive plane. He discovers some new and wonderful things about his lady, or at least about his feelings for his lady. It really is not important that he possess her, as he would like to do — a state of mind incomprehensible to the ancients, to Catullus, to Sappho. The fact that he loves her makes him feel, somehow, a better man (it is true, also, that when he finds she has made a fool of him, he feels a worse man). She fills him with all sorts of noble thoughts. How he, in his humility, looking up perhaps from some lowly station in life, to a Countess, a Duchess, a Queen, would like to be worthy of her, in goodness, in grace of speech, in delicacy of sentiment, in fineness of social perception [*ensenhamen*!]! The so-called Platonic element in the Provençal lyric is never more than this — even when, to express the full loveliness of his lady, words fail the troubadour, till he hits on the comparison with the Virgin herself!

What fun to think of her, just as she is, with her white skin, her pretty hands, her tall, slender figure, her smiling eyes! What a thrill when she recognizes him in the crowd of courtiers and blesses him with her salutation! Her letter did not come today? Is she cross? Has he offended her? Is she jealous? What if he had wings like a nightingale to alight on her window and croon his love! That springtime about him! How warm the air, how fragrant the flowers, how sweet the songs of the birds! If only she were here — what joy!

It was the discovery of the troubadours that one could pass to this nearby sphere of expression in the amorous sentiment only to find that sentiment more engaging than it had been before. It was the discovery of the troubadours that once on this safe ground, apart from sex, apart also from social institutions such as marriage, all women could in a way become the property of all men, in an atmosphere of urbane compliment and refined sentiment. The poetry of the troubadours secularizes woman, introducing her to mundane society on a level with men in a relation that is primarily intellectual without ceasing to be sentimental. It transforms sensuousness into sentiment, in fact, by passing sensuousness through a crucible of gallantry and humor.

Astonishing as these discoveries were to the world of those days — they corresponded, of course, to an actual transformation in the manners of living whereby woman had left the pagan harem and entered the Christian salon — Provençal poetry doubtless owed its fortune as a fashion and a fad to certain of its mechanical traits. With the Provençal lyric, poetry, and along with poetry, the *littérateur*, entered the European *monde* — entered “society.” The Provençal song was the “cross-word puzzle” of its day. It was an exciting amusement for these gentlemen and ladies of old, and a test of breeding and intelligence withal, to devise compliments and pretty figures of speech, invent more and more rarefied states of mind, and express these in meters ever more ingenious and complex and in words arranged in ever more curious patterns. It was the Italians who put a long face on all this, introducing preoccupations of everlasting salvation into what had been gaiety, fun, an aspiration merely to good manners.

The Provençal lyric has a fascinating interest for historians in other important connections. It was the product of Southern French feudalism, and the courts where it was cultivated were destined to succumb before the onmarch of the kings of France. Pretext for the conquest was furnished by the prevalence in Provence of the Catharan heresy. The war of conquest became the Albigensian Crusade. But in those days every region of the sometime Roman world was the nucleus of a possible future nationality. The tendency toward national individuality was strong enough in Southern France to endure even into modern times. This ancient Provençal literature thus turns out to be a specimen of a national literature that is fossilized in an embryonic stage.

And so for the language. The *lenga d'oc*, as used by the troubadours and

spread by them to literary circles all over Europe, is a synthesis of dialects, which blend one into the other through the operation of a half-conscious national spirit. That spirit, however, was never strong enough to create and impose a grammatical norm, much less an orthographic norm. Old Provençal, as it is called, is an example of a national language fixed in an embryonic stage. That the troubadours, if left alone by history, might have anticipated by three hundred years the revolutionary grammatical nationalism which Italy reached in the sixteenth century, is apparent from scattered specimens of Provençal critical literature that have come down to us.

ARTHUR LIVINGSTON

### GUIRAUD LE ROUX

COME, lady, to my song incline,  
 The last that shall assail thine ear.  
 None other cares my strains to hear,  
 And scarce thou feign'st thyself therewith delighted!  
 Nor know I well if I am loved or slighted;  
 But this I know, thou radiant one and sweet,  
 That, loved or spurned, I die before thy feet!  
     Yea, I will yield this life of mine  
     In very deed, if cause appear,  
     Without another boon to cheer.  
 Honor it is to be by thee incited  
 To any deed; and I, when most benighted  
 By doubt, remind me that times change and fleet,  
 And brave men still do their occasion meet.

### BERNARD DE VENTADOUR

#### I

NO marvel is it if I sing  
 Better than other minstrels all,  
 For more than they am I love's thrall,  
 And all myself therein I fling:  
 Knowledge and sense, body and soul,  
     And whatso power I have beside:  
 The rein that doth my being guide  
 Impels me to this only goal!

His heart is dead whence doth not spring  
 Love's odor sweet and magical;  
 His life doth ever on him pall  
 Who knoweth not that blessed thing:  
 Yea, God who doth my life control  
 Were cruel, did he bid me bide  
 A month or even a day, denied  
 The love whose rapture I extol.

How keen, how exquisite the sting  
 Of that sweet odor! At its call  
 An hundred times a day I fall  
 And faint; an hundred rise and sing!  
 So fair the semblance of my dole,  
 'Tis lovelier than another's pride:  
 If such the ill doth me betide,  
 Good hap were more than I could thole!

Yet haste, kind Heaven, the sundering  
 True swains from false, great hearts from small!  
 The traitor in the dust bid crawl,  
 The faithless to confession bring!  
 Ah, if I were the master sole  
 Of all earth's treasures multiplied,  
 To see my lady satisfied  
 Of my pure faith, I'd give the whole!

## II

When I behold on eager wing  
 The skylark soaring to the sun,  
 Till e'en with rapture faltering  
 He sinks in glad oblivion,  
 Alas, how fain to seek were I  
 The same ecstatic fate of fire!  
 Yea, of a truth, I know not why  
 My heart melts not with its desire!

Methought that I knew everything  
 Of love. Alas, my lore was none!  
 For helpless now my praise I bring  
 To one who still that praise doth shun;  
 One who hath robbed me utterly

Of soul, of self, of life entire,  
 So that my heart can only cry  
 For that it ever shall require.  
 For ne'er have I of self been king  
 Since the first hour, so long ago,  
 When to thine eyes bewildering,  
 As to a mirror, I was drawn.  
 There let me gaze until I die;  
 So doth my soul of sighing tire,  
 As at the fount, in days gone by,  
 The fair Narcissus did expire.

III

When the sweet breeze comes blowing  
 From where thy country lies,  
 Meseems I am foreknowing  
 The airs of Paradise.  
 So is my heart o'erflowing  
 For that fair one and wise  
 Who hath the glad bestowing  
 Of life's whole energies;  
 For whom I agonize  
 Whithersoever going.

I mind the beauty glowing,  
 The fair and haughty eyes,  
 Which, all my will o'erthrowing,  
 Made me their sacrifice.  
 Whatever mien thou'rt showing,  
 Why should I this disguise?  
 Yet let me ne'er be ruing  
 One of thine old replies: —  
 "Man's daring wins the prize,  
 But fear is his undoing."

RICHARD CŒUR DE LION

**A**H, certes will no prisoner tell his tale  
 Fitly, unless as one whom woes befall,  
 Still, as a solace, songs may much avail:  
 Friends I have many, yet the gifts are small —

Shame! that because to ransom me they fail,  
I've pined two years in thrall.

But all my liegemen in fair Normandy,  
In England, Poitou, Gascony, know well  
That not my meanest follower would I  
Leave for gold's sake in prison-house to dwell;  
Reproach I neither kinsman nor ally —  
Yet I am still in thrall.

Alas! I may as certain truth rehearse,  
Nor kin nor friends have captives and the dead:  
'Tis bad for me, but for my people worse,  
If to desert me they through gold are led;  
After my death, 'twill be to them a curse  
If they leave me in thrall.

No marvel, then, if I am sad at heart  
Each day my lord disturbs my country more;  
Has he forgot that he too had a part  
In the deep oath which before God we swore?  
But yet in truth I know, I shall not smart  
Much longer here in thrall.

Blackwood's Magazine, February 1836

#### ARNAUT DE MAROILL

SOFTLY sighs the April air  
With the coming of the May;  
Of the tranquil night aware,  
Murmur nightingale and jay;  
Then, when dewy dawn doth rise,  
Every bird, in his own tongue,  
Wakes his mate with happy cries —  
All their joy abroad is flung.

Gladness, lo, is everywhere,  
When the first leaf sees the day:  
And shall I alone despair,  
Turning from sweet love away?

Something to my heart replies  
 Thou too wast for rapture strung:  
 Wherefore else the dreams that rise  
 Round thee, when the year is young?

One than Helen yet more fair,  
 Loveliest blossom of the May,  
 Rose tints hath and sunny hair,  
 And a gracious mien and gay;  
 Heart that scorneth all disguise,  
 Lips where pearls of truth are hung:  
 God who gives all sovereignties  
 Knows her like was never sung.

Though she lead through long despair,  
 I would never say her nay,  
 If one kiss — reward how rare! —  
 Each new trial might repay.  
 Swift returns I'd then devise,  
 Many laborers but not long;  
 Following so fair a prize,  
 I could never more go wrong.

#### GUIRAUT DE BORNEIL

**A**LL-GLORIOUS King! True light of all below!  
 Thou who canst all! If it may please thee so,  
 The comrade of my soul from danger screen;  
 Whom all the darkling hours I have not seen,  
 And now the dawn is near.

Dear comrade, wakest thou, or sleepest yet?  
 Oh, sleep no more, but rouse thee, nor forget  
 The herald signal in the brightening east,  
 The star of day that I behold increased —  
 For now the dawn is near.

Dear comrade, hark my summons, I implore!  
 The little birds are waking — sleep no more!  
 Through all the wood they clamor for the day;  
 Let not yon jealous foe thy steps waylay,  
 For now the dawn is near.

Dear comrade, rouse thee! Throw thy window wide!  
 See writ in heaven the harm that may betide:  
 A trusty guardian in thy comrade own,  
 Or else, alas, the woe will be thine own;  
     For now the dawn is near.

Dear comrade, since at nightfall we did part,  
 Slept have I none, but prayed with fervent heart  
 The son of holy Mary to restore  
 My loyal fellow to my side once more:  
     And now the day is near.

Dear comrade, yonder by the frowning keep,  
 Didst thou not warn me never once to sleep?  
 Now have I watched all night. Thou doest me wrong  
 Thus to disdain the singer and the song;  
     For now the dawn is near.

. . . . .

Sweet comrade mine, I am so rich in bliss,  
 Naught reck I of the morns to follow this!  
 I clasp the loveliest one of mother born,  
 And care no longer, in my happy scorn,  
     If dawn or foe draw near!

## GUILLAUME DE CABESTAING

### I

**I** SEE the days are long and glad;  
     On every tree are countless flowers,  
     And merry birds sing in the bowers,  
 Which bitter cold so long made sad:  
     But now upon the highest hills,  
     Each amid flowers and sparkling rills,  
     After his manner takes delight.

And therefore I rejoice once more  
     That joy of love should warm my breast,  
     And lay my sweet desires to rest.  
 As serpent from false sycamore,

I from false coldness speed me ever;  
Yet for love's sake, which cheers me never,  
All other joys seem vain and light.

Never since Adam plucked the fruit  
Whence thousand woes our race oppress,  
Was seen on earth such loveliness.  
The body, formed that face to suit,  
Is polished more than amethyst;  
Her very beauty makes me tryst,  
Since she of me takes little heed.

Ah, never shall there come a time  
When love, that now inflames my heart,  
Shall struggle from her to depart.  
As plants, even in a wintry clime,  
When the sun shines regain new life,  
So her sweet smiles, with gladness rife,  
Deck me with love, as plants with flower.

I love so madly, many die  
From less, and now my hour seems near.  
For though my love's to me most dear,  
In vain for help or hope I sigh.  
A fire upon my heart is fed,  
The Nile could quench no more than thread  
Of finest silk support a tower.

Alas that I must still lament  
The pains that from love ever flow;  
That baffled hope and ceaseless woe  
All color from my cheek have sent.  
But white as snow shall be my hair,  
And I a trembling dotard, ere  
Of my best lady I complain.

How oft, from lady's love we see  
The fierce and wicked change their mood;  
How oft is he most kind and good  
Who, did he not love tenderly,  
Would be each passion's wayward slave.  
Thus am I meek with good and brave,  
But haughty to the bad and vain.

Thus with delight each cherished woe I dree,  
And sweet as manna seems slight joy to me.

Blackwood's Magazine, February 1836

## II

There is who spurns the leaf, and turns  
The stateliest flower of all to cull:  
So on life's topmost bough sojourns  
My lady; the most beautiful!  
Whom with his own nobility  
Our Lord hath graced, so she may move  
In glorious worth our lives above,  
Yet soft with all humility.

Her pleading look my spirit shook,  
And won my fealty long ago;  
My heart's blood stronger impulse took,  
Freshening my colors. And yet so,  
No otherwise discovering  
My love, I bode. Now, lady mine,  
At last, before thy throngèd shrine,  
I also lay my offering.

## III

The visions tender  
Which thy love giveth me,  
Still bid me render  
My vows, in song, to thee;  
Gracious and slender,  
Thine image I can see,  
Wherever I wend, or  
What eyes do look on me.  
Yea, in the frowning face  
Of uttermost disgrace,  
Proud would I take my place  
Before thy feet,  
Lady, whose aspect sweet  
Doth my poor self efface,  
And leave but joy and praise. . . .

Who shall deny me  
 The memory of thine eyes?  
 Evermore by me  
 Thy lithe white form doth rise.  
 If God were nigh me  
 Alway, in so sure wise,  
 Quick might I hie me  
 Into His Paradise!

RAIMON DE MIRAVAL

**F**AIR summer-time doth me delight,  
 And song of birds delights no less;  
 Meadows delight in their green dress,  
 Delight the trees in verdure bright;  
 And far, far more delights thy graciousness,  
 Lady, and I to do thy will, delight.  
 Yet be not this delight my final boon,  
 Or I of my desire shall perish soon!  
 For that desire most exquisite  
 Of all desires, I live in stress —  
 Desire of thy rich comeliness;  
 Oh, come, and my desire requite!  
 Though doubling that desire by each caress,  
 Is my desire not single in thy sight?  
 Let me not then, desiring sink undone;  
 To love's high joys, desire be rather prone!  
 No alien joy will I invite,  
 But joy in thee, to all excess:  
 Joy in thy grace, nor e'en confess  
 Whatso might do my joy despite.  
 So deep my joy, my lady, no distress  
 That joy shall master; for thy beauty's light  
 Such joy hath shed, for each day it hath shone,  
 Joyless I cannot be while I live on.

## GUILLAUME DE POITIERS

## I

**B**EHOLD the meads are green again,  
 The orchard-bloom is seen again,  
 Of sky and stream the mien again  
     Is mild, is bright!  
 Now should each heart that loves obtain  
     Its own delight.

But I will say no ill of love,  
 However slight my guerdon prove;  
 Repining doth not me behove:  
     And yet — to know  
 How lightly she I fain would move  
     Might bliss bestow!

There are who hold my folly great,  
 Because with little hope I wait;  
 But one old saw doth animate  
     And me assure:  
 Their hearts are high, their might is great,  
     Who well endure.

## II

Desire of song hath taken me,  
 But sorrowful must my song be;  
 No more pay I my fealty  
     In Limousin or Poitiers.

Since I go forth to exile far,  
 And leave my son to stormy war,  
 To fear and peril; for they are  
     No friends who dwell about him there.

What wonder then my heart is sore  
 That Poitiers I see no more,  
 And Fulk of Anjou must implore  
     To guard his kinsman and my heir?

If he of Anjou shield him not,  
 And he who made me knight, I wot

Many against the boy will plot,  
Deeming him well-nigh in despair.

Nay, if he be not wondrous wise,  
And gay, and ready for emprise,  
Gascons and Angevins will rise,  
And him into the dust will bear.

Ah, I was brave and I had fame,  
But we are sundered, all the same!  
I go to Him in whose great name  
Confide all sinners everywhere.

Surrendering all that did elate  
My heart — all pride of steed or state —  
To Him on whom the pilgrims wait,  
Without more tarrying, I repair.


Forgive me, comrade most my own,  
If aught of wrong I thee have done!  
I lift to Jesus on his throne  
In Latin and Románs my prayer.

Oh, I was gallant, I was glad,  
Till my Lord spake, and me forbade;  
But now the end is coming sad,  
Nor can I more my burden bear.

Good friends, when that indeed I die,  
Pay me due honor where I lie:  
Tell how in love and luxury  
I triumphed still — or here or there.

But farewell now, love, luxury,  
And silken robes and miniver!

# COMTESSE DE DIE

F that I would not, I, alas! must sing,  
He whom I love has caused me such deep pain:  
For though I love him more than earthly thing,  
My love and courtesy but meet disdain,

And beauty, merit, wit, are all in vain;  
 But I must mourn as hopelessly and long  
 As if I wittingly had done him wrong.

It comforts me, sweet friend, to think that never  
 Have I 'gainst you in word or deed transgressed:  
 More than Seguis Valens <sup>1</sup> I loved you ever,  
 And that my love surpasses yours I'm blessed;  
 For that you are worthier far, O dearest, best.  
 You're proud to me in conduct, speech, and air,  
 But to all others kind and debonaire.

It marvels me, sweet friend, that you can feel  
 Towards me that pride that cuts me to the heart:  
 All wrong it were that any dame should steal  
 Your love from me, whate'er may be her art;  
 And never let the memory depart  
 Of what our love was. Mother divine!  
 Forbid that coldness sprang from fault of mine.

Your prowess which all others hold so dear,  
 Your fame, disquiet me with their bright shine;  
 For not a lady, whether far or near,  
 But will, if e'er she love, to you incline.  
 But you, sweet friend, ah! well might you divine  
 Where beats the heart more tender than them all:  
 Forget not former vows, whate'er befall.

Much should pure fame, much should desert avail,  
 My beauty much, but truth and love far more;  
 Therefore send I this song to bid you hail,  
 And in your ear my thoughts and hopes to pour.  
 I fain would know, O friend that I adore!  
 Why you to me are ever harsh and cold:  
 Is't pride or hate, or think you me too bold?  
 All this my message bears, and this beside,  
 That many suffer from excess of pride.

Blackwood's Magazine, February 1836

<sup>1</sup> Seguis and Valens were the hero and heroine of a romance of that day.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

**U**NDER the hawthorns of an orchard lawn,  
 She laid her head her lover's breast upon,  
 Silent, until the guard should cry the dawn; —  
 Ah God! ah God! Why comes the day so soon?

I would the night might never have passed by!  
 So wouldst thou not have left me, at the cry  
 Of yonder warder to the whitening sky; —  
 Ah God! ah God! Why comes the day so soon?

One kiss more, sweetheart, ere the melodies  
 Of early birds from all the fields arise!  
 One more, without a thought of jealous eyes! —  
 Ah God! ah God! Why comes the day so soon?

And yet one more, under the garden wall,  
 For now the birds begin their festival,  
 And the day wakens at the warder's call; —  
 Ah God! ah God! Why comes the day so soon?

'Tis o'er! O dearest, noblest, knightliest,  
 The breeze that greets thy going fans my breast!  
 I quaff it, as thy breath, and I am blest! —  
 Ah God! ah God! Why comes the day so soon?

Fair was the lady, and her fame was wide;  
 And many knights for her dear favor sighed;  
 But leal the heart out of whose depths she cried —  
 Ah God! ah God! Why comes the day so soon?

BERTRAND D'ALAMANON

**A** KNIGHT was sitting by her side  
 He loved more than aught else beside;  
 And as he kissed her, often sighed: —  
 Ah, dearest, now am I forlorn,  
 Night is away — alas, 'tis morn!  
                     Ah, woe!  
 Already has the warder cried,

"Up and begone, 'tis now bright day —  
The dawn has passed away."

Ah, dearest love! it were a thing  
Sweet beyond all imagining,  
If naught could day or dawning bring  
There, where, caressing and caressed,  
A lover clasps her he loves best.

Ah, woe!

Hark! what must end our communing!  
"Up and begone, 'tis now bright day —  
The dawn has passed away."

Dearest, whate'er you hear, believe  
That nothing on the earth can grieve  
Like him who must his true love leave:  
This from myself I know aright.  
Alas, how swiftly flies the night!

Ah, woe!

The warder's cry gives no reprieve:  
"Up and begone, 'tis now bright day —  
The dawn has passed away."

I go! Farewell, sweet love, to thee,  
Yours I am still, where'er I be.  
Oh, I beseech you think on me!  
For here will dwell my heart of hearts,  
Nor leave you till its life departs.

Ah, woe!

The warder cries impatiently,  
"Up and begone, 'tis now bright day —  
The dawn has passed away."

Unless I soon to you can fly,  
Dearest, I'll lay me down and die;  
So soon will love my heart's springs dry.  
Ah! soon will I return again —  
Life without you is only pain.

Ah, woe!

Hark to the warder's louder cry!  
"Up and begone, 'tis now bright day —  
The dawn has passed away."

Blackwood's Magazine, February 1836

[The above poems are all translated by Harriet Waters Preston except for the four accredited to Blackwood's Magazine.]

# MEDIEVAL GERMAN LITERATURE

## OLD HIGH GERMAN PERIOD

A HISTORY of German literature in the sense of a history of written records does not begin until the eighth century and is closely connected with the introduction of Christianity among the German speaking tribes of the Continent. In its wake came the Roman alphabet and the possibility of making written records. This happened later for Germany proper than for the other parts of the Germanic world. The Goths, who were the first to come in contact with the superior Græco-Roman civilization, could boast of written records in the shape of a Bible translation as early as the fourth century. The Germanic tribes who settled in the British Isles had developed a literature of considerable merit in the English tongue by 700 A.D. before the earliest meager specimens of German make their appearance.

To be sure, the Teutons had an alphabet, the runes, before they became Christians, but of a literature of any extent in runes we have not a particle of evidence.

Yet the capacity for poetic expression and the existence of poetic traditions among the ancient Germani is amply attested by classical writers as well as by the evidence of language. Tacitus in a well-known passage of his 'Germania' speaks of ancient songs which among the Germans supplied the place of annals and specifically mentions Arminius, the hero of the battle of the Teutoburg forest, as the subject of such songs for years after his death. He also mentions poems celebrating the ancestors of the Germani sprung from Mannus, the son of the earth-born god Tuisko. Evidently this refers to heroic and divine lays such as we have in the Norse Edda. We also read in the 'Germania' of the Germans going into battle singing. The burial of a chieftain, as Jordanes relates it of Attila, and as it appears in the English epic of 'Beowulf,' was attended by ceremonial processions and the singing of songs commemorative of the deeds of the hero. And the poet, the English *scop*, the Norse *skald*, is a conventional figure in Germanic poetry. To the accompaniment of the harp he entertained his hearers with memories of the past or praise of the exploits of the chief and his warriors. Such a singer was heard by Priscus, who visited Attila's court. We also recall the scenes in 'Beowulf' where the *scop* or gleeman sings in Heorot before Hrothgar and his thanes. Even in the much later 'Lay of the Nibelungs' and that of 'Kudrun' the singer finds an honored place. Evidently there was a considerable body

of German literature from the pagan period, but it is lost beyond recall, and its nature and extent is only a matter of conjecture.

But of the subject-matter of the heroic poetry of the oldest period we can form an idea from information gleaned from historians of the time. Of especial value is the 'History of the Goths' written by Jordanes in the sixth century. Here we get distinct glimpses of the great heroic legends as they lived on among the Goths. We can clearly discern the historical elements and see how the great migration of peoples was the background and basis of much of the heroic tradition. The great personages of that stirring time, Attila the Hun, Theoderic and Ermanarik, the Gothic rulers, gather around themselves a mass of legendary matter and live on in German poetry as Etzel, Dietrich von Bern (Verona), and Ermanrich. A great disaster which befell the Burgundians at the hands of the Huns finds its reflex in the fall of the Nibelungs at the court of Etzel. With such historical memories were blended myths and tales until fact and fiction were so intermingled that they can no longer be separated. Thus the story of Siegfried and the Nibelungs was fused with that of Etzel and both were joined to the Dietrich-legend so that an enormous legendary cycle was the result, destined to supply material for succeeding generations of poets in Germany and Scandinavia. In fact the great Siegfried-Nibelungen-legend arose among the Franks and Burgundians, and found rich development among Low Germans and Scandinavians as well as Bavarians and Austrians. Myth, fairy-tale, and history all contributed to its making. Other Germanic tribes had heroic lore to perpetuate. Old English and Old Norse literature teems with allusions to heroic legends, some of which are known of only in this way. In England expression was given to some of this material in epic form, while in Germany and the Northern lands progress was not made beyond the stage of the episodic ballad.

Of all this old pagan poetry German literature has preserved only the scantiest remnants, two spells, the Merseburg Incantations, and the fragmentary Hildebrand-lay. The 'Lay of Hildebrand' is preserved only in fragmentary form in the covers of a Latin manuscript. Its language is a strange mixture of High and Low German; its metrical form, the alliterative long line, is defective, and there are evident gaps in the text. Its theme is the familiar one of the story of Sohrab and Rustam, the tragic combat of father and son, which is here connected with the Dietrich cycle. Hildebrand, Dietrich's trusted vassal, returns with the army of his lord, who after thirty years of exile returns to Italy to win back from Otacher (Odoacer) his kingdom. In the ranks of the enemy is his own son Hadubrand, whom he left as a child at the time of his flight with Dietrich. Father and son parley in the manner of Homeric heroes and the former is soon in no doubt whom he faces. But all his efforts to convince and conciliate the hot-headed and distrustful young warrior are met with scorn and insult. Honor compels the father to engage in a battle in which victory and defeat are alike disastrous. The close of the

poem is missing, but we know from other sources, as well as parallel versions, that the son is slain and the heart-broken father left to lament his fate. This tragic close was altered in the later folk-ballads of the fifteenth century to suit the spirit of a less heroic age.

The 'Lay of Hildebrand' was preserved by a lucky accident. The only people of the time who could write were the monks and they cared little for poetry setting forth ideals for the most part flatly irreconcilable with Christian teaching. Blood-vengeance, a sacred duty with the Germanic warrior, was particularly abhorrent to the Church. Furthermore the language of the Church was Latin; when it resorted to the vernacular it was for purely practical purposes of instruction and edification. Hence the tone of Old High German literature is mainly religious and its esthetic merit small. The two most extensive and ambitious poetic efforts of this period, the Old Saxon 'Heliand' [Saviour] and Otfrid's 'Book of the Gospels,' in the Rhenish Franconian dialect, are distinctly missionary literature. Both aim to make the story of the Gospels more familiar to the German people.

The 'Heliand' is a metrical paraphrase of the New Testament in alliterative verse dating from about 830. A Latin preface, of later origin possibly, informs us that the poet, a singer of renown among his Saxon people, was urged to the task by King Ludwig the Pious himself. He was certainly a man of no mean poetic gift. The biblical story is brought before the listener with a vivid realism that could not fail to make its appeal. At the same time the atmosphere is quite Germanic. Christ has become a veritable Germanic chieftain, who holds his thanes, the apostles, by his lavishness in spending gifts. The apostles in turn are bound to him by bonds of unwavering loyalty like Germanic warriors to their lord. What conflicts with this point of view — the birth in the manger, the entry of Christ into Jerusalem on a donkey, the desertion of the master by his disciples, and many other such features — is either omitted, modified, or explained away. On the other hand what little opportunity offers itself to describe a fight is seized on with alacrity. The episode of Peter's drawing the sword in defence of his lord is amplified into a description of many lines. The whole story is told in the manner and style of an ancient epic as we know it from 'Beowulf.'

Some forty years later Otfrid, a monk of the monastery of Weissenburg in Alsace, completed his 'Liber Evangeliorum' or 'Book of the Gospels.' He also had a practical aim, to instruct the plain people who did not know Latin and to turn them away from what he calls the "obscene songs of the laymen." That he succeeded in this purpose may well be doubted. Otfrid lacked the gifts necessary for popular appeal. His poem produces the impression of labor. Erudition takes the place of spontaneity. The story is continually interrupted by allegorizing and sermonizing interpretations. Besides, it is too lyrical in tone for an epic. Lyrical passages, such as that descriptive of the Annunciation, are its best parts. As poetry it is decidedly inferior to the 'Heliand.' Nev-

ertheless it holds a more important place in the history of German literature because it is the first German poem of note to make use of the new Romance technique of end-rhyme in place of alliteration. Henceforth alliterative verse disappears from German poetry.

In the introduction to his book Otfrid sounds the patriotic note, voicing his pride in his Frankish nationality, and justifying his attempt to tell the sacred story in his native tongue. Such a reference to things of the outside world is almost unique in the literature of this period. No doubt, the gleemen sang of the great political events that happened during the reigns of the great Karl and his sons. But written literature takes no notice of them. The great emperor himself, who became the central figure of the French *épopée*, inspired no poetry in the German tongue that we know of. When the "matter of France" appears in German literature later on it was imported from France.

The only poem that was inspired by an event of the time is the 'Lay of Ludwig,' in celebration of the victory won by King Ludwig over the Northmen at Saucourt in 881. But the tone of the poem is distinctly ecclesiastical. The coming of the Northmen is a trial sent by God and King Ludwig is divinely summoned to deliver his people. His victory is the reward of his piety. The author was surely no layman.

The encouragement given to the mother-tongue by the Carolingians was not continued by the emperors of the Saxon dynasty in the tenth century. Latin again became the exclusive language for literature. From this century we have hardly a line of German poetry. Even the old heroic tales, that still lived on in oral tradition, if they were found worth the telling, received a Latin garb. Thus the young monk Ekkehard of St. Gall composed the 'Lay of Walther and Hildgund' in smooth Vergilian hexameters and gives us a story from the Hunnish-Burgundian cycle. Another monk of Lorraine in the 'Ecbasis Captivi' [Escape of the Prisoner] relates his own experiences under the guise of an animal-story, in which the lion, fox, and wolf already play conspicuous parts, thus furnishing the earliest example of the beast-epic. The learned nun Hrotsvith of Gandersheim wrote Latin book-dramas in imitation of Terence with the avowed purpose of supplanting that frivolous author in the affection of the religious reading public. And an unknown monk of Tegernsee about 1030 produced in 'Ruodlieb' a genuine romance of adventure affording most interesting glimpses of the life of that period.

The only German writings of this period deserving of note are the prose-writings of the learned Notker Labeo of St. Gall (d. 1022). His translations into German earned for him the surname Teutonicus. They are lost in large part; all that remains are the Psalms, Boëthius' 'De Consolatione,' and fragments of Aristotle. Notker is a thorough master of the language and offers idiomatic versions marked with occasional Latinisms. In his commentaries he employs a mixture of Latin and German. His observations of gram-

metrical phenomena, of accent and quantity and such matters, are invaluable to the student of language.

MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN PERIOD 1050-1500

The eleventh century brought to Germany a wave of asceticism consequent upon the reforms of Cluny, and this put an end to the neo-classicism of the Ottonian era. Again we get a German literature purely religious in tone and exhibiting this time a spirit of bitter hostility to the world and all things worldly. The ever recurrent thought of the time is "Memento Mori," varied in prose and verse by a number of writers, most passionately by Heinrich of Melk (about 1160), who does not shrink from the description of most gruesome and abhorrent scenes in order to enforce his lesson. There is little to interest the modern reader in the rhymed paraphrases of biblical themes, descriptions of heaven and hell, and exhortations making up the literature of this period. But the twelfth century brings a change. The reaction against one-sided asceticism comes in with the rise of chivalry and its ideals. The Crusades had profoundly stirred the western world and while they quickened religious zeal everywhere they also brought knighthood to the front. Heaven might be won not by mortification of the flesh alone, but by military service in the cause of God and His Church. And, above all, interest in the things of this world was stimulated by contact with new lands and strange peoples. French and German knights intermingled and French culture spread across the Rhine. The world of the East revealed its marvels to the Crusaders and fascinated the imagination of western lands. The taste for tales of wonder and adventure had to be appeased and the gleeman was quick to seize his opportunity. Exotic subjects were the fashion and the clerical poet, to hold his audience, was forced to make concessions to the rising secular spirit. He looked abroad for material and turned to France. Thus the sway of French in the literature of Germany begins. The 'Lay of Alexander' and the 'Lay of Roland' were both written by priests and for both a French romance is the basis. Though both deal with a worldly subject the treatment nevertheless is in the spirit of the Church, particularly so in the 'Lay of Roland,' where the crusading ideal is emphasized. In the Alexander-poem the craze for Oriental marvels is satisfied, the most charming of these marvels being the flower-maidens encountered by the heroes in far-off India. But the close of the story is made to point a moral on the vanity of worldly glory. In both poems the influence of the minstrel's art is unmistakable. Presently this minstrel-art appears in written form in the epics of 'King Rother' and 'Duke Ernst,' both purely secular in content and spirit. 'King Rother' has its scene of action in Constantinople, a manifestation of the interest which the Crusades had awakened in the West for things Byzantine. It is a story of bride-stealing such as the gleeman's audience

loved and to which it was accustomed from the earlier times when such stealing was the accepted way of getting a wife. The loyalty of lord to vassal and vice versa was also a familiar and popular motif in this kind of poetry. Loyalty of friendship is the theme of 'Duke Ernst,' but this poem owes its popularity chiefly to the marvels which are introduced into the second part of the story, which sends the hero into eastern lands as far as India there to see those strange sights that so strongly appealed to the imagination of the age.

With these poems we have reached the threshold of what German literary historians call the Middle High German Flourishing Period, which extends from about 1180 to 1250. It was the period when the empire under the Hohenstaufen dynasty reached its greatest outward splendor and prestige. The stirring events of this time, the struggle of the Emperors Frederick Barbarossa and Frederick II against the papacy and Italian commonwealths, together with the Crusades, gave a tremendous impetus to the chivalric ideals, and these in turn reacted on the literature. A splendid outburst of poetic genius was the result, an outburst that in the brief space of half a century gave Germany a wealth of epics and lyric poems that justly entitles this period to be called a "Blütezeit" [time of flowering].

This poetry is completely dominated by knightly ideals. Chivalry as an institution emanated from France and wherever it spread French customs and manners followed in its wake. To the knightly ideal all Christian Europe paid homage, and in consequence the culture of the age was cosmopolitan and a ready interchange of ideas and subjects was made possible. In literature and scholarship France held the position of leader. German poets as a rule did not invent but borrowed from French sources and translated or paraphrased more or less freely according to taste and individual capacity. In fact the poet is often at pains to name his source and in case of deviation therefrom he is moved to explain or even to apologize. The author of the 'Lay of Alexander' names as his informant a certain Alberic de Besançon and naïvely adds: "If he lied, I lie." And Wolfram, presenting a version of the Grail story differing in many parts from that of Chrestien, pretends to follow a certain Kyot (Guiot) of whom nothing is known and who, in the opinion of many scholars, never existed.

Yet it would be incorrect to regard the German versions as mere translations, even where agreement in subject-matter is close. The French narration, as a rule, is more vivid and objective, the German indulges in more reflection and analysis of emotion. A modicum of originality and the use of free oral tradition is also to be reckoned with. And in the case of the folk-epics we are dealing with purely indigenous material.

The poetry of this period is thoroughly aristocratic. It appeals exclusively to courtly circles and was written by men, who, if not aristocrats themselves, were at least in close touch with high society. It is rooted in the social life of

French courtly society. It is also frankly worldly, religion appearing only on the surface. And above all it is under the spell of Dame Minne, courtly love, whose power is glorified as irresistible. In a typical romance of chivalry love is the force that sets the story in motion and keeps it going. In the service of his lady the knight goes in quest of adventure, her favor is his highest satisfaction, her displeasure his greatest misfortune. Much of this love-making is obviously a matter of convention, the poetry inspired by it being more a matter of the imagination than of the heart. The troubadour and minnesinger, moreover, usually addressed his verses to a married lady, thus bringing in an element that easily made for immorality by offering a standing temptation to translate theory into practice. Great force of character and deep passions are not to be looked for in this art, which attains supreme excellence more in form than in content.

The new ideals came from France by way of the Netherlands and the first real courtly epic makes its appearance in that region in the Low Frankish dialect. The 'Eneit' of Heinrich von Veldeke tells the story of Æneas on the basis of a French romance which, in accordance with the usual custom, had completely medievalized the story of Vergil. Æneas is a typical knight and perfect lover. Dido and Lavinia experience the irresistible power of Minne, which is described somewhat like a disease and at great length. The six lines which Vergil devotes to Lavinia are expanded to nearly fourteen hundred by Veldeke. The "matter of Rome" is romanticized with a vengeance. The same treatment was accorded by Herbart von Fritzlar and Konrad von Würzburg to other ancient subjects like the Trojan War.

But the subject-matter best suited for the exemplification of the chivalric ideals was the famous "matter of Britain" dealing with King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table. The origin, development, and transmission of this legendary material is treated elsewhere in this volume. The old Celtic champion had been transformed by French romancers into the very flower of chivalry and his court was the high school of knightly manners. The acknowledged master of French Arthurian romance was Chrestien de Troyes and two of his romances, 'Erec' and 'Ivain,' were introduced into German literature by the Swabian knight, Hartmann von Aue, who, with Wolfram von Eschenbach and Gottfried von Strassburg, brought the Middle High German court-epic to perfection.

The theme of both romances, the 'Erec' as well as 'Iwein,' is the conflict between knightly honor and the duties of married life, and in both cases a happy solution is found. In his 'Gregory' the poet turns to religious romance, the legend of the "good sinner," who born of incest and unwittingly guilty of incest atones by an act of superhuman penance. Also religious in tone but far less stern is the charming poem of 'Poor Henry,' a tale of womanly devotion and self-sacrifice which miraculously effects the cure of the leprous knight.

In contrast to the clear and limpid tyle of Hartmann we have the difficult and obscure manner of his greater contemporary, the Bavarian Wolfram von Eschenbach, whose 'Parzival' has been called the profoundest medieval epic of known authorship before Dante's 'Divina Commedia.' The subject belongs to the great cycle of the Grail and its serious tone and high moral purpose entitle it to first place among the romances of that cycle.

Parzival, brought up by his mother as a "tumber tor," or guileless fool, runs away to be made a knight at Arthur's court. By chance he rides into the Grail-castle, inaccessible to all but the chosen knight, and sees its marvels, chief of which is the mysterious *Grail*, which Wolfram conceives as a wondrous stone of magic powers conferred upon it by a sacred host laid upon it by a dove on Good Friday. It will be noted that this differs strikingly from the conception of a blood-vessel prevalent in most of the French romances. He beholds the suffering of the wounded king Anfortas, but fear of offending against conventional etiquette represses the question which curiosity and pity alike urge to his lips. He thereby misses the chance of healing the sick king and ending the sorrow of the Grail-knights. For this act of heartlessness he is cursed by Kundry, the messenger of the Grail, in open scene at Arthur's court. Feeling himself disgraced through no fault of his own he rebels against God and resolves to seek again the mysterious castle. But the Grail cannot be won by knightly bravery; it reveals itself only to him whom God chooses. When Parzival, after years of weary wandering, makes his submission to God he is called to the castle to be king of the Grail. This time he puts the fated question and heals the stricken Anfortas. In the end he is happily reunited with his faithful wife and his two lovely sons.

The poem is in part based on the 'Perceval' of Chrestien, but the latter part is Wolfram's own, for the French poem is unfinished. There are, however, apart from this many deviations, notably, as we have had occasion to point out, in the conception of the Grail itself, which Chrestien somewhat vaguely describes as a vessel, though not as a blood-chalice. Wolfram claims to follow in his account a Provençal poet Kyot (Guiot), of whose work nothing is known.

In his 'Parzival' Wolfram presents the ideal of knighthood realized; the worldly and spiritual sides of chivalry are blended in the hero who through doubt and despair struggles on to unwavering faith and ultimate triumph. It will be noted that the material of the fairy-tale is here invested with profound ethical significance. The impulses of the heart are superior to the dictates of outward convention. That alone raises Wolfram's epic above the romance of Chrestien. In fact its deep seriousness contrasts strikingly with the frothy and often frivolous character of Arthurian romance. Another noteworthy feature is Wolfram's attitude towards marriage, the very antithesis of the troubadour-ideal. Chrestien's Perceval does not marry the maiden he rescues, but Wolfram's hero does, and steadfast loyalty to his wife is

as much a saving factor in his case as his untiring search for the Grail. There is in the German poet's story nothing of the monastic spirit that pervades the later French Grail-romances, where the hostility to woman is so pronounced that the married Grail-quester Perceval is displaced by the virgin-knight Galahad. The spirituality of 'Parzival' blended with its humanity insures for this poem an enduring interest that few medieval romances can claim.

The closing lines of Wolfram's poem tell briefly of Loherangrin's mission. Here we get the story of the swan-knight, based on a French romance of the 'Chevalier au Cygne.' The story was retold by Konrad of Würzburg (about 1260), and still later (about 1290) at wearisome length by an unknown Bavarian poet who calls the hero Lohengrin. Thus the swan-knight becomes connected with the Holy Grail.

If Wolfram presents chivalry from its spiritual side, Gottfried von Strassburg presents it from the purely worldly side. His 'Tristan' is the most polished version of that most famous love-romance of the Middle Ages. Already by the middle of the twelfth century the old Celtic love-tale had been elaborated by a French poet into a unified romance. Eilhart von Oberge had given a German 'Tristrant' (about 1190) based on a French *jongleur* version rich in incident but rather coarse in tone. Gottfried follows the more courtly form of the story as presented by the Anglo-Norman trouvère Thomas; of his poem only a few fragments are extant, but we know the substance through Norse and English versions. The story of Tristan and Isold is the story of sensual love triumphant over moral law. The lovers act under the spell of a love-potion of which they partake unwittingly. Every restraint of the moral law and social code is henceforth swept aside by the guilty, love-intoxicated pair. Feudal loyalty and conjugal fidelity are as naught against the irresistible might of Minne. The poet sympathizes with the lovers and expects the reader to do the same. The love-potion relieves the pair of moral responsibility. The emphasis is on the intensity of their passion and their unwavering fidelity to one another. The clever tricks by which the lovers again and again deceive the trusting old king made fine entertainment for courtly audiences accustomed to listen to the verses of troubadours. And Gottfried commands all the technical resources of language; his consummate artistry charms us even where we cannot approve. And after all the tragic close is the one redeeming and ennobling feature of this otherwise immoral story. It gives it a unique position among the romances of chivalry.

But Gottfried did not live to finish his poem. The death of the lovers was told by two continuators, who, however, fell back on the Berol-Eilhart version, which also furnished the later chapbook with its material.

From the romances of chivalry with their exotic material we now turn to the folk-epic dealing with matter of indigenous growth. The great poetic florescence gave abiding literary form to the heroic legends that had lived on among the people through oral tradition. It was in Austria that Germany's

great epic, the 'Nibelungenlied,' took shape and about 1200 attained its present form. Unlike the knightly romances, which are composed in short rhymed couplets, the 'Nibelungenlied' is written in four-lined stanzas; and this poetic form is employed in most of the folk-epics that followed. All attempts to connect the authorship with some definite name have failed. The poet remains anonymous. In this respect also the folk-epic differs from the romance of chivalry.

When the old heroic legend of Siegfried and the Burgundians was adapted to the courtly milieu of the twelfth century it underwent considerable changes. This becomes evident if we compare the older form as preserved in the Seyfridballad, the 'Thidrekssaga,' the Eddic lays, and the 'Völsungasaga' with the Middle High German poem. Siegfried in particular suffered; he lost much of his heroic grandeur by being transformed into a king's son and perfect knight trained in all knightly accomplishments and acting according to the knightly code of gallantry. At the very beginning he is introduced as the lover who sets out to woo the fair Kriemhild, the sister of the Burgundian kings. His youthful exploits, as known to the old legend, the dragon-fight, the acquisition of invulnerability through the horny skin, the winning of the treasure, the ride through the flames to win the sleeping battle-maiden — all these are suppressed or barely alluded to. They did not fit into the chivalric setting. The ride through fire, the supreme test of the hero, is replaced by athletic games in which the suitor has to engage at peril of his life. The noble Valkyrie of the Norse version has degenerated into an athletic amazon. Gunther, assisted by Siegfried invisible through the tarn-cap, is victorious and wins Brunhild for his wife. Siegfried as a reward for this service at last gets the hand of Kriemhild, whom he has set out to woo at the very start of the story. But the deceit is discovered in due time through a quarrel of the queens and the wrath of Brunhild can be appeased only by Siegfried's death. Hagen, Gunther's faithful vassal, treacherously murders the hero. Kriemhild, faithful to the memory of her husband, bides her time. She becomes the wife of the great King Etzel, lord of the Huns, and treacherously lures the Burgundians, who in the second part of the lay are called Nibelungs, to Etzel's court. In a series of dreadful combats they are overwhelmed by the Huns incited to the attack by Kriemhild. Her brothers perish. Hagen, refusing to the last to reveal the hiding-place of the treasure, is slain by the queen's own hand, and, she in turn is struck dead by the indignant Hildebrand, Dietrich's vassal. The disconsolate Etzel and the survivors lament the dead. Love's delight has ended as always in sorrow — that is the burden of the poet's song.

Although a product of the age of chivalry there is little of the chivalric spirit in the poem, and that spirit is chiefly shown in the conception of the love between Siegfried and Kriemhild. In the second part the old heroic character of the saga shines forth undimmed. The Germanic virtue of loyalty

is incarnate in Hagen. It redeems his otherwise odious character and invests him with a grandeur which compels our admiration if not sympathy. Loyalty is also the driving motive of Kriemhild's actions — loyalty to the memory of her husband. Here, however, comes a new emphasis on the motive of love. In the Norse version Gudrun (*i. e.*, the German Kriemhild) avenges the death of her brothers, murderous though they be, on Atli, their slayer. The bonds of blood are stronger than those of marriage. In the 'Nibelungen Lay' she unhesitatingly sacrifices her kin to her thirst for revenge. Love is the ruling passion here, and the love of Kriemhild dominates the story from first to last and gives it unity. It also determines the development of her character from the tender, lovely maiden at the beginning to the infuriated, relentless vixen at the close. Her revenge is the outstanding feature of the story. Christianity has hardly touched the poem; its spirit is fundamentally pagan.

Besides the courtly version of the 'Nibelungenlied' a version nearer to the old form persisted in popular tradition and found expression in a rude Seyfrid ballad, preserved only in late prints of the sixteenth century, and in the 'Thidrekssaga,' which, though written in Norse, draws its material from Low German tradition. In these versions, as well as in the parallel Norse versions, the primitive elements of the legend are far better preserved. A critical comparison of all these versions gives an insight into the genesis and development of the saga. For the second part the historical basis is clear; Etzel is the historical Attila. But all attempts to find a historical basis for the Siegfried story have failed to convince. For this the roots seem to lie in fairy-tale and myth. That the legend contains a blend of myth, fairy-lore, and history is generally conceded.

The strophic form is ill-suited to a lengthy story and the 'Nibelungenlied' shows many defects attributable to this cause; especially disagreeable is the frequency of empty fourth lines. Aside from this there is needless prolixity in the narration of events and many tedious descriptions halt the story. But these are defects of the period. Inconsistencies also occur due to the fact that the poet had in mind variant versions which he did not succeed in harmonizing. But taken as a whole the poem makes a monumental impression. It is the German contribution to the world's epic literature.

In the wake of the 'Nibelungenlied' followed a number of indigenous epics, most of them also in strophic form. By far the best of these is the 'Lay of Kudrun,' written in Austria, but dealing with a saga of the North Sea. It is a story of woman's loyalty and love. Kudrun, forcibly taken from her betrothed lover, remains unshakably faithful to him through years of adversity, until she is rescued. Although here too there is much fierce fighting, in the end all turns out happily. The tragic grandeur of the Nibelungen story is lacking here. The stern character of the old Hilde-ballad is softened by the sentimental spirit of the age of chivalry.

Most of the other folk-epics of this age have to do with the famous Dietrich

of Bern and his heroes. Much of it is old heroic legend, much of it is pure fairy-lore. It was inevitable that the Dietrich cycle and Nibelungen cycle should coalesce; in the 'Nibelungenlied' Dietrich is Etzel's chief liege-man and it is his intervention that decides the fray. Presently a gleeman brought the two favorite heroes together in single combat. This happens in the 'Rosen-garten' [Garden of Roses]. Here Siegfried is beaten and saved from death only through the pleading of Kriemhild. In South Germany Dietrich, not Siegfried, was the favorite hero.

The "Blütezeit" also brought a wonderful flowering of lyric poetry. The origin of the *Minnesang* is a moot question. Certainly lyric poems of some kind were produced before this time. But not until the middle of the twelfth century does the lyric appear as literature. These earliest lyrics are simple in form, direct in expression, and natural in tone. There is no conventionality in these early effusions of love; in fact, it is the woman who as a rule makes the advances. But at the height of its development the *Minnesang* has all the artificiality and convention of Provençal troubadour poetry and the influence of that poetry is unmistakable not only on the spirit of the German lyric but also on its form. The dominating theme is service to a lady whose name might not be mentioned, for the troubadour code required secrecy in love-making, which was more an affair of art than of passion. It will be remembered that the object of the poet's devotion was usually married. Besides the ever-present theme of love, there are the joys of summer and sorrows of winter which are sung of in endless variation. All this makes for uniformity and monotony. The number of singers is large, but few have decided individuality. By far the greatest of them, in fact one of the greatest of all lyric poets, is Walther von der Vogelweide, who combines in his verse the art of the troubadour with the spontaneity of the folk-song. He too at first wrote minnesongs in the conventional manner, but soon broke with this manner and sounded the note of sincere and heart-felt emotion. Even when he uses the well-worn imagery of the freshness of a May morning as a setting for woman's beauty, he does so with a charm and grace that is inimitable. Finally he emancipates himself from all convention and addresses real love-poems to an unmarried woman, a girl of low degree. Here he becomes popular in the best sense of the word; some of these poems, like the famous 'Under the Linden,' are veritable folk-songs.

But Walther is not merely a minnesinger; he also brought the "Spruch" or maxim to its highest level of excellence. To this form of poetry he gives a dignity hitherto unknown. In his sententious verses he reveals the seriousness and nobility of his character. But above all he makes the "Spruch" the vehicle for his political views, so that by the force of his genius it becomes a powerful factor in the life of the German people. In passionate verses he deplores the wretched condition of the German lands, the civil strife, the religious conflict between papacy and empire. In the struggle between rival

claimants for the imperial crown he repeatedly changes sides, influenced, no doubt, by the generosity, or the lack of it, displayed toward the poor wandering minstrel that he was. But he always was on the side of the empire against the papacy. It will not be pretended that he was free from partisan bias, but the sincerity of his patriotism is unquestioned. Withal he was deeply religious — his verses attack the pope and clergy, but not the Church. Toward the close of his life the religious note deepens. Fervently he appeals for the Crusade and longs to be a soldier of the cross. The mournful elegy written on revisiting the scenes of his youth closes with this note of longing, to earn not earthly reward but the eternal crown in the service of Christ.

Already Walther had occasion to express resentment at the intrusion of a boorish note into the aristocratic minnesong. He seems to refer to Niedhart von Reuenthal, who represents the reaction against the over-refinement and unreality of courtly love. He seeks his enjoyment among the peasants and prefers to make love to peasant-girls. His poems are frankly devoted to "lower Minne." Tannhäuser, who was to become the famous hero of the legend of the Venus-mountain, mocks at courtly love-making and parodies the minnesong. The woman-cult in all its extravagance appears in the poetic autobiography of Ulrich von Lichtenstein. Here the erotic sentiment borders on the insane.

The minnesong had outlived itself. It was doomed when the social system with which it was bound up passed away with all its artificialities and conventions. The "Spruch," which had existed side by side with the minnesong from the very beginning, and which had been raised to a level of high excellence by Walther, now came to be the leading form of lyric poetry. It appealed to the taste of the rising burgher-class which displaced the knightly caste in social leadership. The didactic spirit had been strong even in the best period of the "Blütezeit"; it is seen in poems like 'Der Welsche Gast' [The Foreign Guest], by Thomasin of Zirclaere, and 'Der Renner' [The Courser] of the Bamberg school-master Hugo von Trimberg, where the sole aim is to exhort and instruct. The collection of maxims known as 'Bescheidenheit' [Worldly Wisdom] by a minstrel who calls himself Freidank, is the best and most famous "Spruch" poetry the thirteenth century produced. And the scope of this genre widens with the increase of its popularity. A satiric note is already discernible in Reinmar von Zweter as well as Freidank. And presently the "Spruch" is a deposit for all kinds of knowledge and erudition and thus prepares the way for the meistersingers and their pedantic art.

The public which appreciated this kind of poetry was not likely to have much use for the unrealities of chivalric romance. Its taste was rather for the realistic short-story or didactic tale such as 'Farmer Helmbrecht.' That was a story told in grim earnest. But the "Schwank" or humorous anecdote cultivated by the minstrel at all times now was revived and won immediate

favor. A collection of such stories telling of the pranks of "Pfaffe Amis," a cleric who lives by his wits and succeeds by clever tricks, was written by the Stricker in Austria and proved the prototype of books of roguery like that of Eulenspiegel. The same author wrote "bispiel" [or examples] with a moral explicitly set forth at the end of the story. And this kind of literature was to be in vogue in the next two centuries, more so than the author's bulky compilation of romances about Charlemagne known as 'Karlmeinet.'

On the basis of a French original an Alsatian gleeman, Heinrich der Glichezaere [the Dissembler], had composed his 'Reinhart Fuchs' (about 1180). Here already a satiric note is discernible, and this note becomes pronounced in the long Renard romances that arose in France later on. But the formation of a real unified beast epic took place in the Netherlands and the classic version of the Renard story, the Low German 'Reinke de Vos,' which appeared at Lübeck in 1498, is a version from the Dutch poem of Henrik van Alkmaer (1457). To this Low German version the Renard epic owes the popularity which has continued to this very day. Goethe, who in 1794 retold the story of the fox in classical hexameters, called it not inaptly the "unholy world-bible."

Middle High German literature is almost exclusively in verse. Prose was used only for practical purposes in the fields of law and religion. After the year 1235 German appears occasionally as the language of legal documents in place of Latin. About 1225 a Saxon knight wrote in Low German his famous 'Sachsenspiegel' [Mirror of the Saxons], the code of law in use in his native land. But the most notable prose of the period is represented by sermons, especially those of Berthold von Regensburg (d. 1272), the most popular and famous preacher of the German Middle Ages.

ARTHUR F. J. REMY

## FROM THE 'NIBELUNGENLIED'

### KRIEMHILD

IN stories of our fathers, high marvels we are told  
 Of champions well approved in perils manifold.  
 Of feasts and merry meetings, of weeping and of wail,  
 And deeds of gallant daring I'll tell you in my tale.

In Burgundy there flourished a maid so fair to see,  
 That in all the world together a fairer could not be.  
 This maiden's name was Kriemhild; through her in dismal strife  
 Full many a prowrest warrior thereafter lost his life.

Many a fearless champion, as such well became,  
 Wooed the lovely lady; she from none had blame.  
 Matchless was her person, matchless was her mind:  
 This one maiden's virtue graced all womankind.

Three puissant kings her guarded with all the care they might:  
 Gunther and eke Gernot, each a redoubted knight,  
 And Giseller the youthful, a chosen champion he;  
 This lady was their sister, well loved of all the three.

They were high of lineage, thereto mild of mood,  
 But in field and foray champions fierce and rude.  
 They ruled a mighty kingdom, Burgundy by name;  
 They wrought in Etzel's country deeds of deathless fame.

At Worms was their proud dwelling, the fair Rhine flowing by;  
 There had they suit and service from haughtiest chivalry  
 For broad lands and lordships, and glorious was their state,  
 Till wretchedly they perished by two noble ladies' hate. . . .

A dream was dreamt by Kriemhild, the virtuous and the gay,  
 How a wild young falcon she trained for many a day,  
 Till two fierce eagles tore it; to her there could not be  
 In all the world such sorrow as this perforce to see.

To her mother Uta at once the dream she told,  
 But she the threatening future could only thus unfold:  
 "The falcon that thou trainedst is sure a noble mate;  
 God shield him in his mercy, or thou must lose him straight."

"A mate for me? what sayest thou, dearest mother mine?  
 Ne'er to love, assure thee, my heart will I resign.  
 I'll live and die a maiden, and end as I began,  
 Nor (let what else befall me) will suffer woe for man."

"Nay," said her anxious mother, "renounce not marriage so;  
 Would'st thou true heartfelt pleasure taste ever here below,  
 Man's love alone can give it. Thou'rt fair as eye can see:  
 A fitting mate God send thee, and naught will wanting be."

"No more," the maiden answered, "no more, dear mother, say:  
 From many a woman's fortune this truth is clear as day,  
 That falsely smiling Pleasure with Pain requites us ever.  
 I from both will keep me, and thus will sorrow never."

So in her lofty virtues, fancy-free and gay,  
 Lived the noble maiden many a happy day,  
 Nor one more than another found favor in her sight;  
 Still at the last she wedded a far-renowned knight.

He was the self-same falcon she in her dream had seen,  
 Foretold by her wise mother. What vengeance took the queen  
 On her nearest kinsmen who him to death had done!  
 That single death atoning died many a mother's son.

#### SIEGFRIED

In Netherland then flourished a prince of lofty kind  
 (Whose father was called Siegmund, his mother Siegelind).  
 In a sumptuous castle down by the Rhine's fair side;  
 Men did call it Xanten: 'twas famous far and wide.

I tell you of this warrior, how fair he was to see;  
 From shame and from dishonor lived he ever free.  
 Forthwith fierce and famous waxed the mighty man.  
 Ah! what height of worship in this world he wan!

Siegfried men did call him, that same champion good;  
 Many a kingdom sought he in his manly mood,  
 And through strength of body in many a land rode he.  
 Ah! what men of valor he found in Burgundy!

Before this noble champion grew up to man's estate,  
 His hand had mighty wonders achieved in war's debate,  
 Whereof the voice of rumor will ever sing and say,  
 Though much must pass in silence in this our later day.

In his freshest season, in his youthful days,  
 One might full many a marvel tell in Siegfried's praise:  
 What lofty honors graced him, and how fair his fame;  
 How he charmed to love him many a noble dame.

As did well befit him, he was bred with care,  
 And his own lofty nature gave him virtues rare;  
 From him his father's country grace and honor drew,  
 To see him proved in all things so noble and so true.

He now, grown up to youthhood, at court his duty paid:  
 The people saw him gladly; many a wife and many a maid

Wished he would often thither, and bide forever there;  
They viewed him all with favor, whereof he well was ware.

The child by his fond parents was decked with weeds of pride,  
And but with guards about him they seldom let him ride.  
Uptrained was he by sages, who what was honor knew,  
So might he win full lightly broad lands and liegemen too.

Now had he strength and stature that weapons well he bore;  
Whatever thereto needed, he had of it full store.  
He began fair ladies to his love to woo,  
And they inclined to Siegfried with faith and honor true.

#### HAGEN'S ACCOUNT OF SIEGFRIED

As all alone and aidless he was riding once at will,  
As I have heard reported, he found beside a hill  
With Niblung's hoarded treasure full many a man of might;  
Strange seemed they to the champion, till he came to know them right.

They had brought the treasure, as just then befell,  
Forth from a yawning cavern: now hear a wonder tell,  
How those fierce Nibelungers the treasure would divide;  
The noble Siegfried eyed them, and wondered as he eyed.

He nearer came and nearer, close watching still the clan  
Till they got sight of him too, when one of them began,  
"Here comes the stalwart Siegfried, the chief of Netherland."  
A strange adventure met he with that Nibelungers' band.

Him well received the brethren Shilbung and Nibelung.  
With one accord they begged him, those noble princes young  
To part the hoard betwixt them; and ever pressing bent  
The hero's wavering purpose till he yielded full consent.

He saw of gems such plenty, drawn from that dark abode,  
That not a hundred wagons could bear the costly load,  
Still more of gold so ruddy from the Nibelungers' land:  
All this was to be parted by noble Siegfried's hand.

So Niblung's sword they gave him to recompense his pain;  
But ill was done the service, which they had sought so fain,  
And he so hard had granted: Siegfried, the hero good,  
Failed the long task to finish; this stirred their angry mood.

The treasure undivided he needs must let remain,  
 When the two kings indignant set on him with their train;  
 But Siegfried gripped sharp Balmung (so hight their father's sword),  
 And took from them their country and the beaming precious hoard.

For friends had they twelve champions, each, as avers by tale,  
 A strong and sturdy giant; but what could all avail?  
 All twelve to death successive smote Siegfried's mastering hand,  
 And vanquished chiefs seven hundred of the Nibelungers' land

With that good weapon Balmung; by sudden fear dismayed  
 Both of the forceful swordsman and of the sword he swayed,  
 Unnumbered youthful heroes to Siegfried bent that hour —  
 Themselves, their lands, their castles submitting to his power.

These two fierce kings together he there deprived of life;  
 Then waged with puissant Albric a stern and dubious strife —  
 Who thought to take full vengeance for both his masters slain,  
 But found his might and manhood with Siegfried's matched in vain.

The mighty dwarf successless strove with the mightier man;  
 Like to wild mountain lions to th' hollow hill they ran;  
 He ravished there the cloud-cloak from struggling Albric's hold,  
 And then became the master of th' hoarded gems and gold.

Whoever dared resist him, all by his sword lay slain.  
 Then bade he bring the treasure back to the cave again,  
 Whence the men of Niblung the same before had stirred;  
 On Albric last the office of keeper he conferred.

He took an oath to serve him, as his liegeman true,  
 In all that to a master from his man is due.  
 Such deeds (said he of Trony) has conquering Siegfried done;  
 Be sure such mighty puissance, knight has never won.

Yet more I know of Siegfried, that well your ear may hold:  
 A poison-spitting dragon he slew with courage bold,  
 And in the blood then bathed him; this turned to horn his skin.  
 And now no weapons harm him, as often proved has been.

#### HOW SIEGFRIED FIRST SAW KRIEMHILD

Now went she forth, the loveliest, as forth the morning goes  
 From misty clouds outbeaming; then all his weary woes

Left him, in heart who bore her, and so long time had done.  
He saw there stately standing the fair, the peerless one.

Many a stone full precious flashed from her vesture bright;  
Her rosy blushes darted a softer, milder light.  
Whate'er might be his wishes, each could not but confess  
He ne'er on earth had witnessed such perfect loveliness.

As the moon arising outglitters every star  
That through the clouds so purely glimmers from afar,  
E'en so love-breathing Kriemhild dimmed every beauty nigh.  
Well might at such a vision many a bold heart beat high.

Rich chamberlains before them marched on in order due;  
Around th' high-mettled champions close and closer drew,  
Each pressing each, and struggling to see the matchless maid.  
Then inly was Sir Siegfried both well and ill apaid.

Within himself thus thought he: "How could I thus misdeem  
That I should dare to woo thee? sure 'twas an idle dream!  
Yet, rather than forsake thee, far better were I dead."  
Thus thinking, thus impassioned, waxed he ever white and red.

So stood the son of Sieglind in matchless grace arrayed,  
As though upon a parchment in glowing hues portrayed  
By some good master's cunning; all owned, and could no less,  
Eye had not seen a pattern of such fair manliness.

Those who the dames attended bade all around make way;  
Straight did the gentle warriors, as such became, obey.  
There many a knight, enraptured, saw many a dame in place  
Shine forth in bright perfection of courtliness and grace.

Then the bold Burgundian, Sir Gernot, spoke his thought: —  
"Him who in hour of peril his aid so frankly brought,  
Requite, dear brother Gunther, as fits both him and you,  
Before this fair assembly; th' advice I give, I ne'er shall rue.

"Bid Siegfried come to Kriemhild; let each the other meet:  
'Twill sure be to our profit, if she the warrior greet.  
'Twill make him ours forever, this man of matchless might,  
If she but give him greeting, who never greeted knight."

Then went King Gunther's kinsmen, a high-born haughty band  
 And found and fair saluted the knight of Netherland: —  
 "The king to court invites you, such favor have you won;  
 His sister there will greet you: this to honor you is done."

Glad man was then Sir Siegfried at this unlooked-for gain;  
 His heart was full of pleasure without alloy of pain,  
 To see and meet so friendly fair Uta's fairer child.  
 Then greeted she the warrior maidenly and mild.

There stood he, the high-minded, beneath her star-bright eye,  
 His cheek as fire all glowing; then said she modestly,  
 "Sir Siegfried, you are welcome, noble knight and good!"  
 Yet loftier at that greeting rose his lofty mood.

He bowed with soft emotion, and thanked the blushing fair;  
 Love's strong constraint together impelled th' enamoured pair;  
 Their longing eyes encountered, their glances every one  
 Bound knight and maid forever; yet all by stealth was done.

That in the warmth of passion he pressed her lily hand,  
 I do not know for certain, but well can understand  
 'Twere surely past believing they ventured not on this:  
 Two loving hearts, so meeting, else had done amiss.

No more in pride of summer nor in bloom of May  
 Knew he such heartfelt pleasure as on this happy day,  
 When she, than May more blooming, more bright than summer's pride,  
 His own, a dream no longer, was standing by his side.

Then thought full many a champion, "Would this had happed to me,  
 To be with lovely Kriemhild as Siegfried now I see,  
 Or closer e'en than Siegfried: well were I then, I ween."  
 Never yet was champion who so deserved a queen.

Whate'er the king or country of the guests assembled there,  
 All could look on nothing save on that gentle pair.  
 Now 'twas allowed that Kriemhild the peerless knight should kiss.  
 Ne'er in the world had drained he so full a draught of bliss. . . .

She now the minster entered; her followed many a dame;  
 There so her stately beauty her rich attire became,  
 That drooped each high aspiring, born but at once to die.  
 Sure was that maid created to ravish every eye.

Scarce could wait Sir Siegfried till the mass was sung,  
Well might he thank his fortune that, all those knights among,  
To him inclined the maiden whom still in heart he bore,  
While he to her, as fitted, returned as much or more.

When now before the minster after the mass she stood,  
Again to come beside her was called the champion good.  
Then first by that sweet maiden thanks to the knight were given,  
That he before his comrades so warrior-like had striven.

"God you reward, Sir Siegfried!" said the noble child,  
"For all your high deservings in honor's bead-roll filed,  
The which I know from all men have won you fame and grace."  
Sir Siegfried, love-bewildered, looked Kriemhild in the face.

"Ever," said he, "your brethren I'll serve as best I may,  
Nor once, while I have being, will head on pillow lay,  
Till I have done to please them whate'er they bid me do;  
And this, my lady Kriemhild, is all for love of you."

#### HOW THE TWO QUEENS REVEILED ONE ANOTHER

One day at th' hour of vespers a loud alarum rose  
From certain lusty champions that for their pastime chose  
To prove themselves at tilting in the castle court;  
Then many a knight and lady ran thither to see the sport.

There were the proud queens sitting together, as befell,  
Each on a good knight thinking that either loved full well.  
Then thus began fair Kriemhild, "My husband's of such might,  
That surely o'er these kingdoms he ought to rule by right."

Then answered lady Brunhild, "Nay, how can that be shown?  
Were there none other living but thou and he alone,  
Then might, no doubt, the kingdoms be ruled by him and thee;  
But long as Gunther's living, that sure can never be."

Thereto rejoined fair Kriemhild, "See'st thou how proud he stands,  
How proud he stalks — conspicuous among those warrior bands,  
As doth the moon far-beaming the glimmering stars outshine?  
Sure have I cause to pride me when such a knight is mine."

Thereto replied Queen Brunhild, "How brave soe'er he be,  
How stout soe'er or stately, one greater is than he:

Gunther, thy noble brother, a higher place may claim,  
Of knights and kings the foremost in merit and in fame."

Thereunto rejoined fair Kriemhild, "So worthy is my mate,  
All praise that I can give him can ne'er be termed too great.  
In all he does how matchless! In honor too how clear!  
Believ'st thou this, Queen Brunhild? At least he's Gunther's peer."

"Thou shouldst not so perversely, Kriemhild, my meaning take.  
What I said, assure thee, with ample cause I spake.  
I heard them both allow it, then when both first I saw,  
And the stout king in battle compelled me to his law.

"E'en then, when my affection he so knightly wan,  
'Twas fairly owned by Siegfried that he was Gunther's man.  
Myself I heard him own it, and such I hold him still."  
"Forsooth," replied fair Kriemhild, "they must have used me ill.

"How could my noble brethren their power have so applied,  
As to make me, their sister, a lowly vassal's bride?  
For manner's sake then, Brunhild, this idle talk give o'er,  
And by our common friendship, let me hear no more."

"Give o'er will I never," the queen replied again:  
"Shall I renounce the service of all the knightly train  
That hold of him, our vassal, and are our vassals too?"  
Into sudden anger at this fair Kriemhild flew:

"Ay! but thou must renounce it, for never will he grace  
Thee with his vassal service: he fills a higher place  
Than e'en my brother Gunther, noble though be his strain.  
Henceforth thou shouldst be wiser, nor hold such talk again.

"I wonder too, since Siegfried thy vassal is by right,  
Since both of us thou rulest with so much power and might,  
Why to thee his service so long he has denied.  
Nay! I can brook no longer thy insolence and pride."

"Thyself too high thou bearest," Brunhild answer made:  
"Fain would I see this instant whether to thee be paid  
Public respect and honor such as waits on me."  
Then both the dames with anger lowering you might see.

"So shall it be," said Kriemhild: "to meet thee I'm prepared  
Since thou my noble husband a vassal hast declared,  
By the men of both our consorts today it shall be seen,  
That I the church dare enter before King Gunther's queen.

"Today by proof thou'lt witness what lofty birth is mine,  
And that my noble husband worthier is than thine;  
Nor for this with presumption shall I be taxed, I trow:  
Today thou'lt see moreover thy lowly vassal go

"To court before the warriors here in Burgundy.  
Assure thee, thou'lt behold me honored more royally  
Than the proudest princess that ever here wore crown."  
The dames their spite attested with many a scowl and frown.

"Since thou wilt be no vassal," Brunhild rejoined again,  
"Then thou with thy women must apart remain  
From my dames and damsels, as to the church we go."  
Thereto Kriemhild answered, "Trust me it shall be so.

"Array ye now, my maidens," said Siegfried's haughty dame,  
"You must not let your mistress here be put to shame;  
That you have gorgeous raiment make plain to every eye.  
What she has just asserted, she soon shall fain deny."

They needed not much bidding: all sought out their best;  
Matrons alike and maidens each donned a glittering vest.  
Queen Brunhild with her meiny was now upon her way.  
By this was decked fair Kriemhild in royal rich array,

With three-and-forty maidens, whom she to Rhine had brought;  
Bright stuffs were their apparel, in far Arabia wrought.  
So towards the minster marched the maidens fair;  
All the men of Siegfried were waiting for them there.

Strange thought it each beholder, what there by all was seen,  
How with their trains far-sundered passed either noble queen,  
Not walking both together as was their wont before;  
Full many a prowtest warrior thereafter rued it sore.

Now before the minster the wife of Gunther stood;  
Meanwhile by way of pastime many a warrior good

Held light and pleasant converse with many a smiling dame;  
When up the lovely Kriemhild with her radiant meiny came.

All that the noblest maiden had ever donned before  
Was as wind to the splendor her dazzling ladies wore.  
So rich her own apparel in gold and precious things,  
She alone might outglitter the wives of thirty kings.

Howe'er he might be willing, yet none could dare deny  
That such resplendent vesture never met mortal eye  
As on that fair retinue then sparkled to the sun.  
Except to anger Brunhild, Kriemhild had not so done.

Both met before the minster in all the people's sight;  
There at once the hostess let out her deadly spite.  
Bitterly and proudly she bade fair Kriemhild stand:  
"No vassaless precedeth the lady of the land."

Out then spake fair Kriemhild (full of wrath was she),  
"Couldst thou still be silent, better 'twere for thee.  
Thou'st made thy beauteous body a dishonored thing.  
How can a vassal's leman be consort of a king?"

"Whom here call'st thou leman?" said the queen again.  
"So call I thee," said Kriemhild: "thy maidenly disdain  
Yielded first to Siegfried, my husband, Siegmund's son;  
Ay! 'twas not my brother that first thy favors won.

"Why, where were then thy senses? sure 'twas a crafty train,  
To take a lowly lover, to ease a vassal's pain!  
Complaints from thee," said Kriemhild, "methinks are much amiss."  
"Verily," said Brunhild, "Gunther shall hear of this."

"And why should that disturb me? thy pride hath thee betrayed.  
Why didst thou me, thy equal, with vassalship upbraid?  
Know this for sure and certain (to speak it gives me pain),  
Never can I meet thee in cordial love again."

Then bitterly wept Brunhild: Kriemhild no longer stayed;  
Straight with all her followers before the queen she made  
Her way into the minster; then deadly hate 'gan rise;  
And starting tears o'erclouded the shine of brightest eyes.

For all the solemn service, for all the chanted song,  
Still it seemed to Brunhild they lingered all too long.  
Both on her mind and body a load like lead there lay.  
Many a high-born hero for her sorrow was to pay.

Brunhild stopped with her ladies without the minster door.  
Thought she, "This wordy woman shall tell me something more  
Of her charge against me spread so loud and rife.  
If he has but so boasted, let him look to his life!"

Now came the noble Kriemhild begirt with many a knight;  
Then spake the noble Brunhild, "Stop and do me right.  
You've voiced me for a wanton: prove it ere you go.  
You and your foul speeches have wrought me pain and woe."

Then spake the lady Kriemhild, "'Twere wiser to forbear:  
E'en with the gold I'll prove it that on my hand I wear;  
'Twas this that Siegfried brought me from where by you he lay."  
Never lived Queen Brunhild so sorrowful a day.

Said she, "That ring was stolen from me who held it dear,  
And mischievously hidden has since been many a year.  
But now I've met with something by which the thief to guess."  
Both the dames were frenzied with passion masterless.

"Thief?" made answer Kriemhild, "I will not brook the name.  
Thou wouldst have kept silence, hadst thou a sense of shame.  
By the girdle here about me prove full well I can  
That I am ne'er a liar; Siegfried was indeed thy man."

'Twas of silk of Nineveh the girdle that she brought,  
With precious stones well garnished; a better ne'er was wrought:  
When Brunhild but beheld it, her tears she could not hold.  
The tale must needs to Gunther and all his men be told.

#### HOW SIEGFRIED PARTED FROM KRIEMHILD

Gunther and Hagen, the warriors fierce and bold,  
To execute their treason, resolved to scour the wold,  
The bear, the boar, the wild bull, by hill or dale or fen,  
To hunt with keen-edged javelins: what fitter sport for valiant men?

In lordly pomp rode with them Siegfried the champion strong.  
 Good store of costly viands they brought with them along.  
 Anon by a cool runnel he lost his guiltless life.  
 'Twas so devised by Brunhild, King Gunther's moody wife.

But first he sought the chamber where he his lady found.  
 He and his friend already had on the sumpters bound  
 Their gorgeous hunting raiment; they o'er the Rhine would go.  
 Never before was Kriemhild sunk so deep in woe.

On her mouth of roses he kissed his lady dear:  
 "God grant me, dame, returning in health to see thee here;  
 So may those eyes see me too: meanwhile be blithe and gay  
 Among the gentle kinsmen; I must hence away."

Then thought she on the secret (the truth she durst not tell)  
 How she had told it Hagen; then the poor lady fell  
 To wailing and lamenting that ever she was born.  
 Then wept she without measure, sobbing and sorrow-worn.

She thus bespake her husband: "Give up that chase of thine.  
 I dreamt last night of evil — how two fierce forest swine  
 Over the heath pursued thee; the flowers turned bloody red.  
 I cannot help thus weeping: I'm chilled with mortal dread.

"I fear some secret treason, and cannot lose thee hence,  
 Lest malice should be borne thee for misconceived offense.  
 Stay, my beloved Siegfried, take not my words amiss —  
 'Tis the true love I bear thee that bids me counsel this." —

"Back shall I be shortly, my own beloved mate;  
 Not a soul in Rhineland know I who bears me hate:  
 I'm well with all thy kinsmen; they're all my firm allies:  
 Nor have I from any e'er deserved otherwise." —

"Nay! do not, dearest Siegfried! 'tis e'en thy death I dread.  
 Last night I dreamt two mountains fell thundering on thy head,  
 And I no more beheld thee: if thou from me wilt go,  
 My heart will sure be breaking with bitterness of woe."

Round her peerless body his clasping arms he threw;  
 Lovingly he kissed her, that faithful wife and true;  
 Then took his leave, and parted: in a moment all was o'er; —  
 Living, alas poor lady! she saw him nevermore.

HOW SIEGFRIED WAS SLAIN

The noble knight Sir Siegfried with thirst was sore opprest;  
So earlier rose from table, and could no longer rest;  
But straight would to the mountain the running brook to find —  
And so advanced the treason his faithless foes designed.

Meanwhile were slowly lifted on many a groaning wain  
The beasts in that wild forest by Siegfried's manhood slain.  
Each witness gave him honor, and loud his praises spoke.  
Alas, that with him Hagen his faith so foully broke!

Now when to the broad linden they all would take their way,  
Thus spake the fraudulent Hagen, " Full oft have I heard say,  
That none a match in swiftmess for Kriemhild's lord can be,  
Whene'er to race he pleases: would he grant us this to see? "

Then spake the Netherlander, Siegfried, with open heart: —  
" Well then! let's make the trial! Together we will start  
From hence to yonder runnel; let us at once begin:  
And he shall pass for winner who shall be seen to win."

" Agreed! " said treacherous Hagen, " let us each other try."  
Thereto rejoined stout Siegfried, " And if you pass me by,  
Down at your feet I'll lay me humbled on the grass."  
When these words heard Gunther, what joy could his surpass?

Then said the fearless champion, " And this I tell you more:  
I'll carry all the equipment that in the chase I wore —  
My spear, my shield, my vesture — leave will I nothing out."  
His sword then and his quiver he girt him quick about.

King Gunther and Sir Hagen to strip were nothing slow;  
Both for the race stood ready in shirts as white as snow.  
Long bounds, like two wild panthers, o'er the grass they took,  
But seen was noble Siegfried before them at the brook.

Whate'er he did, the warrior high o'er his fellows soared.  
Now laid he down his quiver, and quick ungirt his sword;  
Against the spreading linden he leaned his mighty spear:  
So by the brook stood waiting the chief without a peer.

In every lofty virtue none with Sir Siegfried vied:  
 Down he laid his buckler by the water's side;  
 For all the thirst that parched him, one drop he never drank  
 Till the king had finished: he had full evil thank.

Cool was the little runnel, and sparkled clear as glass;  
 O'er the rill King Gunther knelt down upon the grass;  
 When he his draught had taken he rose and stepped aside.  
 Full fain alike would Siegfried his thirst have satisfied.

Dear paid he for his courtesy: his bow, his matchless blade,  
 His weapons all, Sir Hagen far from their lord conveyed,  
 Then back sprung to the linden to seize his ashen spear,  
 And to find out the token surveyed his vesture near;

Then, as to drink Sir Siegfried down kneeling there he found,  
 He pierced him through the crosslet, that sudden from the wound  
 Forth the life-blood spouted e'en o'er his murderer's weed.  
 Never more will warrior dare so foul a deed.

Between his shoulders sticking he left the deadly spear.  
 Never before Sir Hagen so fled for ghastly fear,  
 As from the matchless champion whom he had butchered there.  
 Soon as was Sir Siegfried of the mortal wound aware,

Up he from the runnel started as he were wood;  
 Out from betwixt his shoulders his own huge boar-spear stood!  
 He thought to find his quiver or his broadsword true;  
 The traitor for his treason had then received his due:

But ah! the deadly wounded nor sword nor quiver found:  
 His shield alone beside him lay there upon the ground;  
 This from the bank he lifted, and straight at Hagen ran:  
 Him could not then by fleetness escape King Gunther's man.

E'en to the death though wounded, he hurled it with such power,  
 That the whirling buckler scattered wide a shower  
 Of the most precious jewels, then straight in shivers broke:  
 Full gladly had the warrior ta'en vengeance with that stroke.

E'en as it was, his manhood fierce Hagen leveled low;  
 Loud all around the meadow rang with the wondrous blow:  
 Had he in hand good Balmung, the murderer he had slain.  
 His wound was sore upon him; he writhed in mortal pain.

His lively color faded; a cloud came o'er his sight:  
He could stand no longer; melted all his might.  
In his paling visage the mark of death he bore.  
Soon many a lovely lady sorrowed for him sore.

So the lord of Kriemhild among the flowerets fell;  
From the wound fresh gushing his heart's blood fast did well.  
Then thus amidst his tortures, e'en with his failing breath,  
The false friends he upbraided who had contrived his death.

Thus spake the deadly wounded: — "Ay! cowards false as hell!  
To you I still was faithful; I served you long and well:  
But what boots all? for guerdon, treason and death I've won;  
By your friends, vile traitors! foully have you done.

Whoever shall hereafter from your loins be born  
Shall take from such vile fathers a heritage of scorn.  
On me you have wreaked malice where gratitude was due; —  
With shame shall you be banished by all good knights and true."

Thither ran all the warriors where in his blood he lay;  
To many of that party sure 'twas a joyless day;  
Who'er were true and faithful, they sorrowed for his fall —  
So much the peerless champion had merited of all.

With them the false king Gunther bewept his timeless end.  
Then spake the deadly wounded, "Little it boots your friend  
Yourself to plot his murder, and then the deed deplore:  
Such is a shameful sorrow; better at once 'twere o'er."

Then spake the low'ring Hagen, "I know not why you moan.  
Our cares all and suspicions are now forever flown.  
Who now are left, against us who'll dare to make defense?  
Well's me, for all this weeping, that I have rid him hence."

"Small cause hast thou," said Siegfried, "to glory in my fate.  
Had I weened thy friendship cloaked such murderous hate,  
From such as thou full lightly could I have kept my life.  
Now grieve I but for Kriemhild, my dear, my widowed wife.

"Now may God take pity, that e'er I had a son,  
Who this reproach must suffer from deed so foully done,  
That by his murderous kinsmen his father thus was slain.  
Had I but time to finish, of this I well might plain.

"Surely so base a murder the world did never see,"  
 Said he, and turned to Gunther, "as you have done on me.  
 I saved your life and honor from shame and danger fell,  
 And thus am I requited by you I served so well."

Then further spake the dying, and speaking sighed full deep: —  
 "O king! if thou a promise with anyone wilt keep,  
 Let me in this last moment thy grace and favor find  
 For my dear love and lady, the wife I leave behind.

"Remember, she's thy sister: yield her a sister's right;  
 Guard her with faith and honor, as thou'rt a king and knight.  
 My father and my followers for me they long must wait,  
 Comrade ne'er found from comrade so sorrowful a fate."

In his mortal anguish he writhed him to and fro,  
 And then said, deadly groaning, "This foul and murderous blow  
 Deep will ye rue hereafter; this for sure truth retain,  
 That in slaying Siegfried you yourselves have slain."

With blood were all bedabbled the flowerets of the field.  
 Some time with death he struggled, as though he scorned to yield  
 E'en to the foe whose weapon strikes down the loftiest head.  
 At last prone in the meadow lay mighty Siegfried dead.

Translated by William Nanson Lettsom

## WOLFRAM VON ESCHENBACH

### THE BOY PERCEVAL

From 'Parzival'

WHEN doubt a human conscience gnaws,  
 Peace from that breast her light withdraws.  
 Beauty and ugliness we find  
 Even in the bravest heart combined,  
 If taint be in him, great or slight,  
 As in the magpie black and white.  
 Yet oftentimes may he savèd be,  
 For both share in his destiny —  
 High heaven and the abyss of hell.

But when the man is infidel,  
 Of midnight blackness is his soul,  
 His course is towards yon pitchy hole;  
 While he of steady mind pursues  
 The shining road the righteous choose.  
 A knight-at-arms am I by birth;  
 In me sleep warlike strength and worth;  
 She who might love me for my song  
 Would show a judgment sadly wrong.  
 For if I seek a lady's grace,  
 And may not go before her face  
 With honors won by shield and sword,  
 I will not woo her, by my word!  
 No other game can have my praise  
 When Love's the stake and Knighthood plays.

I find the usage much to blame  
 Which makes no difference in the name  
 Of women false and women true.  
 Clear-voiced are all, but not a few  
 Quickly to evil courses run,  
 While others every folly shun.  
 So goes the world; but still 'tis shame  
 The bad ones share that honored name.  
 Loyal and fair is womanhood,  
 When once the name is understood.

Many there are who cannot see  
 Anything good in poverty.  
 But he who bears its trials well  
 May save his faithful soul from hell!  
 These trials once a woman bore  
 And gained thereby of grace a store.  
 Not many in their youth resign  
 Riches in life for wealth divine.  
 I know not one in all the earth,  
 Whate'er the sex or age or birth;  
 For mortals all in this agree.  
 But Herzeloide the rich ladie  
 From her three lands afar did go —  
 She bore such heavy weight of woe.  
 In her was no unfaithfulness,  
 As every witness did confess.  
 All dark to her was now the sun;  
 The world's delights she fain would shun.

Alike to her were night and day,  
For sorrow followed her alway.

Now went the mourning lady good  
Forth from her realm into a wood  
In Soltanè the wilderness;  
Not for flowers, as you might guess;  
Her heart with sorrow was so full  
She had no mind sweet flowers to pull,  
Red though they were and bright, or pale.  
She brought with her to that safe vale  
Great Gahmuret's her lord's young child.  
Her servants, with them there exiled,  
Tilled the scant glebe with hoe and plow.  
To run with them she'd oft allow  
Her son. And e'er his mind awoke  
She summoned all this vassal folk,  
And on them singly, woman and man,  
She laid this strange and solemn ban:  
Never of knights to utter word —  
"For if of them my darling heard,  
And knightly life and knightly fare,  
'Twould be a grief to me, and care.  
Now guard your speech and hark to me,  
And tell him naught of chivalrie."

With troubled mien they all withdrew;  
And so concealed, the young boy grew.  
Soltanè's greenwood far within.  
No royal sports he might begin  
Save one — to draw the bow  
And bring the birds above him low  
With arrows cut by his own hand,  
All in that forest land.

But when one day a singing bird  
He shot, and now no longer heard,  
Its thrilling note, he wept aloud,  
This boy so innocent yet proud,  
And beat his breast and tore his hair,  
This boy so wild yet wondrous fair.

At the spring in the glade  
He every day his toilet made.  
Free had he been from sorrow  
Till now, when he must borrow  
Sweet pain from birds.

Into his heart their music pressed  
 And swelled it with a strange unrest.  
 Straight to the queen he then did run;  
 She said, "Who hurt thee, pretty son?"  
 But naught could he in answer say —  
 'Tis so with children in our day.

Long mused the queen what this might be,  
 Till once beneath a greenwood tree  
 She saw him gazing and sighing still,  
 Then knew 'twas a bird's song did fill  
 Her darling's breast with yearning pain  
 And haunting mystery.

Queen Herzeloide's anger burned  
 Against the birds, she knew not why;  
 Her serving-folk she on them turned  
 And bade to quench their hated cry,  
 And chase and beat and kill  
 In every brake, on every hill.  
 Few were the birds that flew away  
 And saved their lives in that fierce fray;  
 Yet some escaped to live and sing  
 Joyous, and make the forest ring.

Unto the queen then spoke the boy,  
 "Why do you rob them of their joy?"  
 Such intercession then he made,  
 His mother kissed him while she said,  
 "Why should I break God's law, and rob  
 The birds of innocent delight?"  
 Then to his mother spoke the boy,  
 "O mother, what is God?"

"My son, in solemn truth I say  
 He is far brighter than the day,  
 Though once his countenance did change  
 Into the face of man.

O son of mine, give wisely heed,  
 And call on him in time of need,  
 Whose faithfulness has never failed  
 Since first the world began.  
 And one there is, the lord of hell,  
 Black and unfaithful, as I tell:  
 Bear thou towards him a courage stout,  
 And wander not in paths of doubt."

His mother taught him to discern

Darkness and light; he quick did learn.  
 The lesson done, away he'd spring  
 To practise with the dart and sling.  
 Full many an antlered stag he shot  
 And home to his lady mother brought;  
 Through snow or floods, it was the same,  
 Still harried he the game.  
 Now hear the tale of wonder:  
 When he had brought a great stag low,  
 Burden a mule might stagger under,  
 He'd shoulder it and homeward go!

Now it fell out upon a day  
 He wandered down a long wood-way,  
 And plucked a leaf and whistled shrill,  
 Near by a road that crossed a hill.  
 And thence he heard sharp hoof-strokes ring,  
 And quick his javelin did swing;  
 Then cried: "Now what is this I hear?  
 What if the Devil now appear,  
 With anger hot, and grim?  
 But certain I will not flee him!  
 Such fearful things my mother told —  
 I ween her heart is none too bold."

All ready thus for strife he stood,  
 When lo! there galloped through the wood  
 Three riders, shining in the light,  
 From head to foot in armor dight.  
 The boy all innocently thought  
 Each one a god, as he was taught.  
 No longer upright then stood he,  
 But in the path he bent his knee.  
 Aloud he called, and clear and brave,  
 "Save, God, for thou alone canst save!"  
 The foremost rider spoke in wrath  
 Because the boy lay in the path:  
 "This clumsy Welsh boy  
 Hinders our rapid course."  
 A name we Bavarians wear  
 Must the Welsh also bear:  
 They are clumsier even than we,  
 But good fighters too, you'll agree.  
 A graceful man within the round  
 Of these two lands is rarely found.

That moment came a knight  
 In battle-gear bedight  
 Galloping hard and grim  
 Over the mountain's rim.  
 The rest had ridden on before,  
 Pursuing two false knights, who bore  
 A lady from his land.  
 That touched him near at hand;  
 The maid he pitied sore,  
 Who sadly rode before.  
 After his men he held his course,  
 Upon a fine Castilian horse.  
 His shield bore marks of many a lance;  
 His name — Karnacharnanz,  
 Le comte Ulterlec.

Quoth he, "Who dares to block our way?"  
 And forth he strode to see the youth,  
 Who thought him now a god in sooth,  
 For that he was a shining one:  
 His dewy armor caught the sun,  
 And with small golden bells were hung  
 The stirrup straps, that blithely swung  
 Before his greaved thighs  
 And from his feet likewise.  
 Bells on his right arm tinkled soft  
 Did he but raise his hand aloft.  
 Bright gleamed that arm from many a stroke,  
 Warded since first to fame he woke.  
 Thus rode the princely knight,  
 In wondrous armor dight.

That flower of manly grace and joy,  
 Karnacharnanz, now asked the boy:  
 "My lad, has seen pass by this way  
 Two knights that grossly disobey  
 The rules of all knight-errantry?  
 For with a helpless maid they flee,  
 Whom all unwilling they have stolen,  
 To honor lost, with mischief swollen."  
 The boy still thought, despite his speech,  
 That this was God; for so did teach  
 His mother Herzeloide, the queen —  
 To know him by his dazzling sheen.  
 He cried in all humility,

"Help, God, for all help comes from thee!"  
 And fell in louder suppliance yet  
 Le fils du roi Gahmuret.

"I am not God," the prince replied,  
 "Though in his law I would abide.  
 Four knights we are, couldst thou but see  
 What things before thine eyes be."

At this the boy his words did stay:  
 "Thou namest knights, but what are they?  
 And if thou hast not power divine,  
 Tell me, who gives, then, knighthood's sign?"  
 "King Arthur, lad, it is;  
 And goest thou to him, I wis  
 That if he gives thee knighthood's name  
 Thou'lt have in that no cause for shame.  
 Thou hast indeed a knightly mien."  
 The chevalier had quickly seen  
 How God's good favor on him lay.  
 The legend telleth what I say,  
 And further doth confirm the boast  
 That he in beauty was the first  
 Of men since Adam's time: this praise  
 Was his from womankind always.

Then asked he in his innocence,  
 Whereon they laughed at his expense:  
 "Ay, good sir knight, what mayst thou be,  
 That hast these many rings I see  
 Upon thy body closely bound  
 And reaching downward to the ground?"  
 With that he touched the rings of steel  
 Which clothed the knight from head to heel,  
 And viewed his harness curiously.  
 "My mother's maids," commented he,  
 "Wear rings, but have them strung on cords,  
 And not so many as my lord's."

Again he asked, so bold his heart:  
 "And what's the use of every part?  
 What good do all these iron things?  
 I cannot break these little rings."

The prince then showed his battle blade:  
 "Now look ye, with this good sword's aid,  
 I can defend my life from danger  
 If overfallen by a stranger,

And for his thrust and for his blow  
 I wrap myself in harness, so."  
 Quick spoke the boy his hidden thought:  
 "'Tis well the forest stags bear not  
 Such coats of mail, for then my spear  
 Would never slay so many deer."

By this the other knights were vexed  
 Their lord should talk with a fool perplexed.  
 The prince ended: "God guard thee well,  
 And would that I had thy beauty's spell!  
 And hadst thou wit, then were thy dower  
 The richest one in heaven's power.  
 May God's grace ever with thee stay."  
 Whereat they all four rode away,  
 Until they came to a field  
 In the dark forest concealed.  
 There found the prince some peasant-folk  
 Of Herzeloide with plow and yoke.  
 Their lot had never been so hard,  
 Driving the oxen yard by yard,  
 For they must toil to reap the fruit  
 Which first was seed and then was root.

The prince bade them good day,  
 And asked if there had passed that way  
 A maiden in distressful plight.  
 They could not help but answer right,  
 And this is what the peasants said:  
 "Two horsemen and a maid  
 We saw pass by this morning;  
 The lady, full of scorning,  
 Rode near a knight who spurred her horse  
 With iron heel and language coarse."

That was Meliakanz;  
 After him rode Karnacharnanz.  
 By force he wrested the maid from him;  
 She trembled with joy in every limb.  
 Her name, Imaine  
 Of Bellefontaine.

The peasant folk were sore afraid  
 Because this quest the heroes made;  
 They cried: "What evil day for us!  
 For has young master seen them thus  
 In iron clad from top to toe,

The fault is ours, ours too the woe!  
 And the queen's anger sure will fall  
 With perfect justice on us all,  
 Because the boy, while she was sleeping,  
 Came out this morning in our keeping."

The boy, untroubled by such fear,  
 Was shooting wild stags far and near;  
 Home to his mother he ran at length  
 And told his story; and all strength  
 Fled from her limbs, and down she sank,  
 And the world to her senses was a blank.

When now the queen  
 Opened her eyelids' screen,  
 Though great had been her dread,  
 She asked: "Son, tell me who has fed  
 Thy fancy with these stories  
 Of knighthood's empty glories?"  
 "Mother, I saw four men so bright  
 That God himself gives not more light;  
 Of courtly life they spoke to me,  
 And told how Arthur's chivalry  
 Doth teach all knighthood's office  
 To every willing novice."

Again the queen's heart 'gan to beat.  
 His wayward purpose to defeat,  
 She thought her of a plan  
 To keep at home the little man.

The noble boy, in simplest course,  
 Begged his mother for a horse.  
 Her secret woe broke out anew;  
 She said, "Albeit I shall rue  
 This gift, I can deny him naught.  
 Yet there are men," she sudden thought,  
 "Whose laughter is right hard to bear;  
 And if fool's dress my son should wear  
 On his beautiful shining limbs,  
 Their scorn will scatter all these whims,  
 And he'll return without delay."  
 This trick she used, alack the day!  
 A piece of coarse sackcloth she chose  
 And cut thereout doublet and hose,  
 From his neck to his white knees,  
 And all from one great piece,

With a cap to cover head and ears;  
 For such was a fool's dress in those years.  
 Then instead of stockings she bound  
 Two calfskin strips his legs around.  
 None would have said he was the same,  
 And all who saw him wept for shame.  
 The queen, with pity, bade him stay  
 Until the dawn of a new day;  
 "Thou must not leave me yet," beseeching,  
 "Till I have given thee all my teaching:  
 On unknown roads thou must not try  
 To ford a stream if it be high.  
 But if it's shallow and clear,  
 Pass over without fear.  
 Be careful everyone to greet  
 Whom on thy travels thou mayst meet;  
 And if any gray-bearded man  
 Will teach thee manners, as such men can,  
 Be sure to follow him, word and deed;  
 Despise him not, as I thee reed.  
 One special counsel, son, is mine:  
 Wherever thou, for favor's sign,  
 Canst win a good woman's ring or smile,  
 Take them, thy sorrows to beguile.  
 Canst kiss her too, by any art,  
 And hold her beauty to thy heart,  
 'Twill bring thee luck and lofty mood,  
 If she chaste is, and good.  
 Lacheleim, the proud and bold,  
 Won from thy princes of old —  
 I'd have thee know, O son of mine —  
 Two lands that should be fiefs of thine,  
 Waleis and Norgals.  
 One of thy princes, Turkentals,  
 Received his death from this foe's hands;  
 And on thy people he threw bands."  
 "Mother, for that I'll vengeance wreak:  
 My javelin his heart shall seek."  
 Next morning at first break of day  
 The proud young warrior rode away.  
 The thought of Arthur filled his mind.  
 Herzeloide kissed him and ran behind.  
 The world's worst woe did then befall.

When no more she saw young Parzival  
 (He rode away. Whom bettered be?)  
 The queen from every falseness free  
 Fell to the earth, where anguish soon  
 Gave her Death's bitter boon.  
 Her loyal death  
 Saves her from hell's hot breath.  
 'Twas well she had known motherhood!  
 Thus sailed this root of every good,  
 Whose flower was humility,  
 Across that rich-rewarding sea.  
 Alas for us, that of her race  
 Till the twelfth age she left no trace!  
 Hence see we so much falsehood thrive.  
 Yet every loyal woman alive  
 For this boy's life and peace should pray,  
 As he leaves his mother and rides away.

Translated by George McLean Harper

## GOTTFRIED VON STRASSBURG

### BLANCHEFLEUR AT THE TOURNAMENT

From 'Tristan and Isolde'

**A**T Tintajuel 'twas, on the plain  
 Where the guests met again;  
 In the loveliest glen  
 Ever beheld by eyes of men  
 In the first freshness of that clime.  
 The gentle, gracious summer-time  
 Had by the sweet Creator's hand  
 With sweet care been poured on the land.  
 Of little wood birdlets bright,  
 That to ears should ever give delight,  
 Of grass, flowers, leaves, and blossoms high,  
 Of all that happy makes the eye  
 Or noble heart delight may gain,  
 Was full the glorious summer plain.  
 Whatever there you wished to find,

Spring had kindly borne in mind —  
 The sunshine by the shadow,  
 The linden on the meadow.  
 The gentle, pleasant breezes,  
 With cunning, sweet caresses,  
 O'er all the guests did lightly sweep.  
 The brilliant flowers did brightly peep  
 From dewy grass and shadow.  
 May's friend, the fresh green meadow,  
 Had from the flowers that he had reared  
 A summer robe so bright prepared,  
 Each guest its glow detected  
 From eye and mien reflected.  
 The sweet tree blossom looked at you  
 With a smile so sweet and true,  
 That all your heart and all your mind  
 Again to the laughing bloom inclined;  
 With eyes playfully burning,  
 Its loving laugh returning.  
 The gentle bird-ditty,  
 So lovely, so pretty,  
 That stirs every feeling,  
 O'er ears and minds stealing,  
 Rang from each bush of the summer vale.  
 The blessed nightingale,  
 The dearest, sweetest bird on tree,  
 That ever blessed ought to be,  
 It sang in the coolness,  
 With such heartfulness,  
 That to every noble heart  
 The sound did joy and glow impart.  
 And now the whole company,  
 Full of mirth and in high glee,  
 Had settled down upon the lawn.  
 There did everyone  
 As his notion or pleasure bent,  
 And put up or arranged his tent.  
 The wealthy were quartered wealthily,  
 The courtly incomparably;  
 Some under silk did rest,  
 Others on the heath gay-drest;  
 To many the linden gave shadow,  
 Others housed on the meadow,

Under leaf-grown twigs demurely.  
 Nor guests nor servants, surely,  
 Rarely were pleasanter  
 Quartered than they were quartered here.  
 Plenty was gathered of the best,  
 Which needful is for mirthful feast,  
 In way of clothing, and eating;  
 Each his own wants meeting,  
 From home had brought provender.  
 King Mark, with regal splendor,  
 Moreover had provided for them.  
 Thus they enjoyed in bliss supreme  
 The gracious time of early spring;  
 Thus joy the feast to all did bring.  
 All that ever a curious man  
 To behold had longed, he then  
 There could have seen certainly.  
 One saw there what one liked to see:  
 Those eyed the pretty women,  
 These watched the peddling showmen;  
 Those looked at the dancing,  
 These at the jousting and lancing.

All that ever heart longed for  
 Was found there in sufficient store;  
 And all who were present,  
 Of joy-ripe years, pleasant  
 Effort made each to exceed  
 At every feast in mirthful deed;  
 And King Mark the good,  
 The courteous and high of mood,  
 Not only on this festivity  
 Had spent his wealth lavishly,  
 But here did he show men  
 A wonder of all women,  
 His sister Blanche fleur —  
 A maid more beautiful than e'er  
 A woman upon earth was seen.  
 Of her beauty one must say, e'en,  
 That no living man could gaze  
 Intently on her glorious face,  
 But he would higher rank and find  
 Women and virtue in his mind.

The blessed eye-pleasure  
 O'er that wide inclosure  
 Gladdened all of young, fresh blood,  
 All noble hearts of courteous mood;  
 And on the lawn could have been seen  
 Many pretty women then,  
 Of whom each by her beauty  
 Should have been queen in duty.  
 Whoe'er had seen them surely would  
 Have drawn from such sight fresh bold mood.  
 Many hearts grew rich with joy.  
 Now began the great tourney  
 Of the servants and of the guests.  
 The boldest and the best  
 Up and down the track now paced.  
 Noble Mark ahead e'er raced  
 With his fellow Riwalin,  
 Whose knights following close and keen  
 Their play to guide ever  
 Did nobly endeavor  
 In their master's glory,  
 For future song and story.  
 Many a horse, in overdress  
 Of cloth or half silk, in the race  
 Was seen on the meadow clover;  
 Many a snow-white cover  
 There shone, or red, brown, green, or blue;  
 Others again, for show, wore too  
 Robes with noble silk worked nice,  
 Or scalloped in many a quaint device,  
 Parted, striped, or braided,  
 Or with trimmings shaded.  
 Gaily, too, appeared there  
 Knights of handsome form and fair,  
 Their armor slit, as if cut to pieces.  
 Even Spring with its balmy breezes,  
 King Mark its high favor showed;  
 For many people in the crowd  
 Were crowned with wreaths of flowers wrought,  
 Which, as his offering, Spring had brought.

In such glorious, blessed May,  
 Began the blessed tourney.

Oft intermixed, the double troop  
 Rode up this grade, rode down that slope.  
 This carried they on so long that day,  
 Till downward swept the glorious play  
 To where Blancheffleur sat, the sweet,  
 Whom I as wonder greet,  
 With pretty women at her side,  
 To watch the show and the gallant ride;  
 And how they rode so nobly all,  
 With carriage imperial,  
 That many an eye with pleasure lit.  
 But whatsoever others did,  
 Still 'twas the courtly Riwalin —  
 As 'twas, indeed, meet to have been —  
 Who before all the knighthood rare  
 Best showed his knightly power there.  
 The women, too, him notice showed,  
 And whispered that, in all the crowd,  
 No one on horse appearing  
 Rode with such gallant bearing.  
 They praised that which in him was shown.  
 "See!" said they — "see! this youth fine-grown,  
 This man, is truly glorious!  
 How gloriously sits all he does,  
 Sit all movements of his bearing!  
 How his body is fair-appearing!  
 How joins with equal grace on him  
 Each imperial limb!  
 How evenly his shield is moved!  
 As if fast-glued, it floats aloft!  
 How doth the shaft his hand befit!  
 How well his robes upon him sit!  
 How stands his head! how glows his hair!  
 Sweet his behavior he doth wear;  
 Glorified is his body all!  
 Ah, happy is the woman who shall  
 Her bliss owe his sweet body."

Well pondered this in study  
 Blancheffleur, the blessed maid;  
 In her secret heart she had,  
 Above all knights, addressed to him  
 Her pleasant thoughts, her wond'rings dim.

She had him in her heart enshrined,  
 He had around her soul him twined;  
 He bore upon high throne  
 The scepter and the crown  
 In the kingdom of her heart,  
 Although the secret she did guard,  
 And from the world keep, as was fit,  
 That no one e'er suspected it.

Translated by A. E. Kroeger

# WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE

## SONG

**W**HEN from the sod the flowerets spring,  
 And smile to meet the sun's bright ray,  
 When birds their sweetest carols sing,  
 In all the morning pride of May,  
 What lovelier than the prospect there?  
 Can earth boast anything more fair?  
 To me it seems an almost heaven,  
 So beauteous to my eyes that vision bright is given.

But when a lady chaste and fair,  
 Noble, and clad in rich attire,  
 Walks through the throng with gracious air,  
 As sun that bids the stars retire —  
 Then where are all thy boastings, May?  
 What hast thou beautiful and gay,  
 Compared with that supreme delight?  
 We leave thy loveliest flowers, and watch that lady bright.

Wouldst thou believe me — come and place  
 Before thee all this pride of May,  
 Then look but on my lady's face,  
 And which is best and brightest say.  
 For me, how soon (if choice were mine)  
 This would I take, and that resign;  
 And say, "Though sweet thy beauties, May,  
 I'd rather forfeit all than lose my lady gay!"

Translated by Edgar Taylor

## LAMENT

**A**H me! whither have vanished the years of age and youth?  
 Has life been but a dream, then, or was it all a truth?  
 And was that really somewhat which I have lived and thought?  
 Surely I must have slumbered, although I knew it not.  
 And now that I'm awakened, I not a whit recall  
 That once I was acquainted amongst these people all:  
 The country and the people 'mongst whom my life passed by  
 Have grown to be estrangèd, as if 'twere all a lie.

They who were once my playmates are weary now and cold;  
 The prairies have been broken, the woods cut down and sold.  
 If yonder river flowed not e'en as it once did flow,  
 I do believe my sorrow would, growing, lay me low.  
 Me greet with hesitation many who knew me well:  
 This wretched world is everywhere a dark, ungrateful hell;  
 And then I think of many days of ecstasy and joy,  
 That now e'en as a stroke on the sea have gone forever by —  
 Forever, forevermore, ah me!

Ah me, how sad and careworn our young men now appear!  
 The men who never sorrow in their fresh minds did wear  
 Do nothing now but weary — Ah me! how can it be?  
 Wherever in the world I turn, no one seems glad to me.  
 Dancing, laughing, singing, grief has driven away;  
 Christian man saw never a world so somber aye:  
 Look now how our women walk with strange headgear,  
 And how our knights and nobles in clownish dress appear.

Letters sharp reproving from Rome have come our way:  
 To mourn we have permission; we must no more be gay.  
 It grieves me to my heart's core — we once did live so grand —  
 That now from cheerful laughter to weeping I must bend.  
 The wild birds of the forest sadden at our complaint,  
 Is't wonder if I also despair and grow more faint?  
 But what — O wretched me! have I been led to scoff?  
 Who follows earthly happiness, from heaven's bliss turneth off  
 Forevermore, ah me!

Ah me, how we are poisoned with the sweetness of the world!  
 I see the bitter gall amidst the sweetest honey curled.

The world is outward beautiful, white, and green, and red,  
But inward, oh! a somber black, gloomy, ay, and dead.

Yet now to who have listened a comfort I will show:

Even a gentle penance forgiveness shall bestow.

Remember this, O knightly lords, 'tis yours to do and seal;

You bear the glittering helmets and breastplates of strong steel.

Moreo'er the shields so steady and the consecrated swords:

O God, that I were worthy to join the victor lords!

Then should I like the others achieve a prize untold —

Not lands that have been promised, nor king's or nobles' gold,

But oh, a wondrous crown, and forevermore to wear

A crown which poorest soldier can win with axe or spear.

Yea, if the noble crusade I might follow o'er the sea,

I evermore should sing, All's well! and nevermore, Ah me!

Nevermore, Ah me!

Translated by A. E. Kroeger

## THE MINNESINGERS

### SONG OF HEINRICH VON VELDEKE

**N**O thanks to Tristan that his heart had been  
Faithful and true unto his queen;  
For thereto did a potion move  
More than the power of love:  
Sweet thought to me,  
That ne'er such cup my lips have prest;  
Yet deeper love than ever he  
Conceived, dwells in my breast:  
So may it be!  
So constant may it rest!  
Call me but thine  
As thou art mine!

## SONG OF HEINRICH VON MORUNGEN

**M**Y lady dearly loves a pretty bird,  
 That sings and echoes back her gentle tone;  
 Were I, too, near her, never should be heard  
 A songster's note more pleasant than my own —  
 Sweeter than sweetest nightingale I'd sing.  
 For thee, my lady fair,  
 This yoke of love I bear:  
 Deign thou to comfort me, and ease my sorrowing.

Were but the troubles of my heart by her  
 Regarded, I would triumph in my pain;  
 But her proud heart stands firmly, and the stir  
 Of passionate grief o'ercomes not her disdain.  
 Yet, yet I do remember how before  
 My eyes she stood and spoke,  
 And on her gentle look  
 My earnest gaze was fixed: oh, were it so once more!

## SONG OF HEINRICH VON MORUNGEN

**M**INE is the fortune of a simple child,  
 That in the glass his image looks upon;  
 And by the shadow of himself beguiled  
 Breaks quick the brittle charm, and joy is gone.  
 So gazed I — and I deemed my joy would last —  
 On the bright image of my lady fair:  
 But ah! the dream of my delight is past,  
 And love and rapture yield to dark despair.

## SONG OF COUNT KRAFT VON TOGGENBURG

**D**OES anyone seek the soul of mirth,  
 Let him hie to the greenwood tree,  
 And there beneath the verdant shade,  
 The bloom of the summer see;  
 For there sing the birds right merrily,

And there will the bounding heart upspring  
To the lofty clouds on joyful wing.

On the hedge-rows spring a thousand flowers,  
And he from whose heart sweet May  
Hath banished care, finds many a joy:  
And I too would be gay,  
Were the load of pining care away;  
Were my lady kind, my soul were light —  
Joy crowning joy would raise its flight. . . .

The flowers, leaves, hills, the vale, and mead,  
And May with all its light,  
Compared with the roses are pale indeed,  
Which my lady bears; and bright  
My eyes will shine as they meet my sight —  
Those beautiful lips of rosy hue,  
As red as the rose just steeped in dew.

SONG OF STEINMAR

WITH the graceful corn upspringing,  
With the birds around me singing,  
With the leaf-crowned forests waving,  
Sweet May-dews the herbage laving,  
With the flowers that round me bloom,  
To my lady dear I'll come:  
All things beautiful and bright,  
Sweet in sound and fair to sight —  
Nothing, nothing is too rare  
For my beauteous lady fair;  
Everything I'll do and be,  
So my lady solace me.

She is one in whom I find  
All things fair and bright combined.  
When her beauteous form I see,  
Kings themselves might envy me;  
Joy with joy is gilded o'er,  
Till the heart can hold no more.  
She is bright as morning sun,

She my fairest, loveliest one:  
 For the honor of the fair,  
 I will sing her beauty rare;  
     Everything I'll do and be,  
     So my lady solace me.

Solace me, then, sweetest! — be  
 Such in heart as I to thee;  
 Ope thy beauteous lips of love,  
 Call me thine, and then above  
 Merrily, merrily I will sail  
 With the light clouds on the gale.  
 Dear one, deign my heart to bless!  
 Steer me on to happiness!  
 Thou, in whom my soul confideth,  
 Thou, whose love my spirit guideth!  
     Everything I'll do and be  
     So my lady solace me.

#### SONG OF THE "MARNER"

**M**ARIA! Virgin! mother! comforter  
 Of sinners! queen of saints in heaven that are!  
 Thy beauty round the eternal throne doth cast  
 A brightness that outshines its living rays;  
     There in the fullness of transcendent joy  
     Heaven's King and thou sit in bright majesty:  
     Would I were there, a welcomed guest at last  
 Where angel tongues re-echo praise to praise!  
 There Michael sings the blessed Saviour's name,  
     Till round the eternal throne it rings once more,  
 And angels in their choirs with glad acclaim,  
     Triumphant host, their joyful praises pour;  
 There thousand years than days more short appear,  
 Such joy from God doth flow and from that mother dear.

ABSENCE

(Anonymous)

**I**F I a small bird were,  
 And little wings might bear,  
 I'd fly to thee;  
 But vain those wishes are:  
 Here, then, my rest shall be.

When far from thee I bide,  
 In dreams still at thy side  
 I've talked with thee;  
 And when I woke, I sighed,  
 Myself alone to see.

No hour of wakeful night  
 But teems with thoughts of light —  
 Sweet thoughts of thee —  
 As when, in hours more bright,  
 Thou gav'st thy heart to me.

SONG OF KONRAD VON WÜRZBURG

**S**EE how from the meadows pass  
 Brilliant flowers and verdant grass;  
 All their hues now they lose: o'er them hung,  
 Mournful robes the woods invest,  
 Late with leafy honors drest.  
 Yesterday the roses gay blooming sprung,  
 Beauteously the fields adorning;  
 Now their sallow branches fail:  
 Wild her tuneful notes at morning  
 Sung the lovely nightingale;  
 Now in woe, mournful, low, is her song.

Nor for lily nor rose sighs he,  
 Nor for birds' sweet harmony,  
 He to whom winter's gloom brings delight:  
 Seated by his leman dear,  
 He forgets the altered year;

Sweetly glide at eventide the moments bright.  
 Better this than culling posies:  
 For his lady's love he deems  
 Sweeter than the sweetest roses;  
 Little he the swain esteems  
 Not possessing that best blessing — love's delight.

## SONG OF JOHANN HADLOUB

**F**AR as I journey from my lady fair,  
 I have a messenger who quickly goes,  
 Morning, and noon, and at evening's close:  
 Where'er she wanders, he pursues her there.  
 A restless, faithful, secret messenger  
 Well may he be, who, from my heart of hearts,  
 Charged with love's deepest secrets, thus departs,  
 And wings his way to her!  
 'Tis every thought I form that doth pursue  
 Thee, lady fair!  
 Ah! would that there  
 My wearied self had leave to follow too!

Translations of Edgar Taylor

## MIDDLE DUTCH LITERATURE

THE earliest records of Dutch literature are of comparatively recent date. There is no Netherlandish epic of the type and of the time of 'Beowulf,' nor has any Dutch contemporary of Cædmon left us sacred poetry in alliterative verse. The language of the old Saxon 'Heliand,' it is true, cannot have differed much from the speech of the Saxon tribes that inhabited the eastern provinces of present-day Holland, but the 'Heliand' was written outside that territory, in a region that has never been counted a part of the Low Countries. The Netherlands were a borderland where French and German civilizations met and mingled, and it may well be that the tardy development of a native literature is due to the predominance of foreign culture to which the Dutch people, still devoid of a national consciousness, gave a divided allegiance. A wish to be understood by both French and Germans may account for the exclusive use of Latin, for it is only in the international language of the Church that in those early days Dutch thought and sentiment found artistic expression. The Low Countries, before the twelfth century, seem to have been a literary no-man's-land between opposing camps where a neutral language was in vogue.

The first Dutch poet of whom history has record was Heynryck van Veldeke, a knight and minnesinger of the twelfth century. As far as we know Van Veldeke was the pioneer who wrote verse in a speech whose forms, until then, had been passed on by oral tradition only. He was born of a noble race in the neighborhood of Maastricht, and in the language of Dutch Limburg the literature of the Netherlands took birth. The patron of Maastricht is St. Servatius, a holy man of the fourth century, whose miracle-working relics made the church where he lies buried a popular shrine for pilgrims in search of health or forgiveness of sins. Van Veldeke's first venture in verse and, consequently, the earliest specimen of Dutch poetry, was a rhymed legend of this saint. But Van Veldeke was destined for greater things. Living in the borderland between French and German culture, he became an intermediary between the two literatures. His epic romance of 'Æneas,' retold from the French in his Limburg dialect, was admired as a model by German poets at the Thuringian court. Before Van Veldeke had yet completed his epic, the manuscript was stolen from his patroness, the Countess Margaret of Cleves, at the time of her marriage to Ludwig III of Thuringia. Veldeke, however much he may have appreciated the implied homage to his talent, searched for nine years until at last he recovered his treasure. It had been transcribed, in the meantime, from the original Limburg dialect into Thuringian forms of

speech, and in this new version the poem exercised strong influence upon contemporary German poets. Veldeke's love songs, imitations of Provençal poetry, were also transposed into Middle High German and won for him the name of "father of the German *Minnesang*." It was Lord Chesterfield, I believe, who said that bishops alone do not suffer from translation. But Veldeke's is an unusual case of a poet who, bishoplike, prospered by the process. As an interpreter of French culture to Germany he won for himself international fame; as the pioneer of a new literature he is remembered in the Netherlands only.

Heynryck van Veldeke had no followers in his native Duchy of Limburg. Maastricht did not give birth to any poets after him, nor did the saint who inspired his first effort attract later makers of verse to his shrine. In the thirteenth century Dutch literature was chiefly written in Brabant and Flanders, then the most prosperous region of the Netherlands. The cloth industry had caused a rapid increase of wealth in the Flemish towns, and the citizen, no longer intent upon his material needs alone, had the money and the leisure to improve his mind. A bourgeois literature replaced the courtly poetry of *Minnesang* and romance. Jacob van Maerlant, the chief among the makers of verse who catered to this new demand for edification and entertainment, exemplifies in his own career that change in the literary trend. His first efforts were romances of chivalry retold in his native Flemish after French and Latin models, stories of Merlin the Magician, of the Holy Grail, of Alexander the Great, of the Siege of Troy. But as he grew older he began to despise these fanciful tales of foreign poets. They were inventors of brazen lies and made of worldly love their leading theme: —

I hardly know a man, forsooth,  
That liveth now and loveth truth.  
But Lancelot, Percheval, Tristrem,  
And Galahad, and such as them,  
Feignèd names that never were,  
Of these the people love to hear.  
Leasings of love and lies of war  
The world is reading wide and far.  
The gospel is too hard to scan  
Because it teacheth truth to man.

Maerlant set himself the task of teaching that hard truth to his Flemish people. Taking Petrus Comestor's 'Historia Scolastica' for his guide, he gave them in rhyming verse the historical contents of the Bible. The clergy does not seem to have approved of his presumption to supersede them as exponents of the Scriptures. In a later work, the 'Spiegel Historiae,' an adaptation of Vincent de Beauvais' 'Speculum Historiale,' he refrained from

translating the theological portions and learned discussions of the original, "because they are too hard for lay folks, and, besides, I am afraid lest the clergy should resent it if I undertook this work. I have been censured by them before, because I revealed the mysteries of the Bible to lay folks." The tradition of Maerlant's censure by the clergy was sufficiently wide-spread to be known in England, a century later, to John Purvey or who else it was that wrote the tract 'Agens hem that seyn that hooli wright schulde not or may not be drawun in to Engliche.' This English author says that "it was herde of a worthi man of Almaine that summe tyme a Flemynge (his name was James Merland) translatid al the Bible into Flemynche, for wiche ded he was somoned before the pope of grete enmyte, and the boke was taken to examynacoun and trwly apreved; it was delivered to hym agene in conficioun to his enmyes." Their persecution was a perverse requital of the hard work that he had spent on his book. An austere sense of duty kept him grinding at his labor till the sweet end was reached. But Duty has never been counted among the Muses, and music there is none in Maerlant's 'Rhyme Bible' verse. It can hardly have been an antidote against the subtle poison of the Arthurian romances; the more he gave his readers of stodgy didactic lore, the sweeter the forbidden fruit must have tasted. And if, in this later period of his life, Maerlant had written nothing else than didactic poems like his 'Rhyme Bible' and 'Spiegel Historiael,' there would be no occasion for mentioning his name at all in these pages. But this self-appointed uplifter and medieval evangelist had the makings of a great poet in him. A small volume of strophic poems, a trifle in comparison to the bulk of his work, reveals a different man from the plodding didacticist. Two of these are in the form of a dialogue between Maerlant and his friend Martyn, a citizen of Utrecht. Life and its perplexing injustices are the subject of their discussion, and in the fearless criticism of all the evil that prevails among mankind, Maerlant proves himself a Flemish counterpart of Jean de Meung. He lacks the Frenchman's biting wit and sarcasm, but there is little in Jean Clopinel's ideas concerning life and society to which Maerlant would not have subscribed. "Do not believe everything that the priests tell you," Martyn says to his friend, "there is many a brainless swine among them," and thus encouraged, the poet dares to pry into the mysteries of God's purpose with his creatures, at the risk of slipping into heresy. His aim was not to question any established doctrine but to reconcile his faith in God with the distressing spectacle of a world steeped in sin. His verse was to shake the slothful Christian out of his moral torpor, to remind him of Christ, and to make him follow His example.

The two most powerful of these strophic poems are the work of his old age:

I looked in the mirror. What saw I there?  
 My aged life, my graying hair,  
 And that death was born with me,

he says in 'Der Kerken Claghe' [The Church's Lament]. Like a knight coming to the rescue of his beloved, the poet champions the Mother Church who has been betrayed by the priestcraft of Rome. The wolves are now the shepherds. Look at these prelates in their costly robes! They would rather dine with the rich than tell them the truth. The poor are crying for help in vain. But God shall requite them! And in 'Van den Lande van over Zee,' he raised a call to arms that the Holy Land, surrendered to the Saracens, might be reconquered for the Catholic Church: —

Christian man, what hast thou wrought?  
 Sleepest thou, and servest not  
 Jesus Christ, thy Lord?  
 Hast his passion then forgot,  
 How he let himself be caught,  
 Crucified and gored?  
 See, without a blow or shot,  
 We have lost the blessed spot  
 Where his blood he poured.  
 There the Saracen has got  
 The Church in bondage, God it wot,  
 Under his cruel sword.  
 And thou sayst not a word?

His poem of the Holy Land was his swan song. The exact year of his death is not known, but he must have passed away before the end of the century.

A. J. BARNOUW

## REINAERT THE FOX

LITERARY criticism in the Middle Ages had more than one string to its bow. Maerlant's censure of the romance of chivalry took the form of downright condemnation, the poets of the 'Reinaert' resorted to the subtler device of parody. This masterpiece of medieval Dutch literature belongs in a class with Chaucer's 'Tale of Sir Thopas.' It pokes fun at a literary genre, and the satirist, in either case, proves his right to assume the critic's rôle by the excellence of his parody as a work of art. The 'Reinaert,' consequently, emanates from the same bourgeois spirit in which Maerlant turned from romantic fiction to the credible facts of history. But their aims were widely apart. Maerlant, with a missionary's zeal, set out to supersede the literature that he condemned by something useful and edifying; the 'Reinaert' poets, preferring entertainment to instruction, did not discard the lies and leasings of romance but only bared them of the romantic glamour by their

transfer into the burlesque of animal life. The comic effect of this artifice was more clearly apparent to thirteenth century readers than it can be to us, who are less familiar with the epic poetry that was ridiculed. Lines and phrases that were copied from these romances were recognized at once and tickled the hearers at their novel application to an odd or a homely incident. No moral is pointed, unless it be the cynical one that cunning and deceit are of more avail than valor. The poets have a sneaking love for their foxy hero, and feel no qualms of conscience in recounting his repeated escapes from the punishment which, from an ethical point of view, he so deserves. The story of the poem is based on one of the many so-called branches of the Old French Reynard Cycle, that which is known by the name of 'Le Plaid' or 'The Trial'; but the Flemish adaptation is so deftly done, and, especially in the second part, with so much freedom and originality in the handling of the plot, that it far surpasses its French model and is universally held to be the greatest specimen of that popular medieval genre, the beast epic.

In the opening line a certain Willem is mentioned as the author, but it was long suspected that the poem was the work of two different hands, especially on account of the difference in treatment of the original, close in the first half, free in the second. The discovery of another manuscript revealed the correctness of this view as it mentioned a certain Arnout as the maker of a Reynard story to which Willem had added his part. To Arnout we probably owe the second and, therefore, older half, to which Willem prefixed his own composition and a new prologue. But the two were so much men of kindred spirit, that the unity of the whole does not suffer from this joint authorship. Willem, perhaps, is the better realist of the two. He is a forerunner of the great *genre* painters of the Flemish school, a literary Brueghel of the thirteenth century. The picture of the motley village crowd running to the attack of poor Bruin who has been caught, by Reynard's wiles, in the cleft of the tree, is worthy of Brueghel's brush.

A. J. BARNOUW

### THE MISFORTUNES OF BRUIN

With these words went Reynard then  
Toward his castel again,  
Nor said farewell; at that same tide  
Lamfreit hath the bear espied  
That he was caught fair and well.  
Whereat he did no longer dwell  
But ran in mickle haste away  
Where he wist help nighest lay.  
And in the neighbor town he gan

Shout to the good folk as he ran  
 The tidings that a bear was caught.  
 The press of people staid for naught;  
 In town abode nor man nor wife;  
 But to have the bear's life  
 They ran whoso that day could run.  
 A good stout besom carried one,  
 And one a flail and one a rake,  
 And one came running with a stake,  
 Even as they left off their work.  
 The very priest ran from the kirk  
 Bearing a crozier as he ran,  
 Lent by an unwilling sacristan,  
 Who himself a banner bore  
 With the which to strike full sore.  
 The priest's wife, Dame Julocke, ran  
 With the distaff wherewith she span  
 Even as she had daily spun.  
 And on her staff essayed to run  
 An aged beldame who, for old,  
 Scarce one tooth in her head still told. . . .  
 Before them all ran on ahead  
 Lamfreit with his sharp broadaxe.  
 Bruin saw his troubles wax  
 From bad to worse and worst at last,  
 And staked all on a single cast.  
 When he heard the loud harou  
 He pulled and twisted till he drew  
 All the hide from off his face.  
 And though his head, in sorry case,  
 He had got free as was his mind,  
 He left some part of him behind:  
 An ear and both his cheeks. I ween  
 A sorrier beast was nowhere seen.  
 How might he now the worser speed?  
 Albeit at last his head was freed,  
 Ere his feet he could withdraw  
 He left behind him every claw  
 And both his shaggy mittens twain.  
 Thus is he scaped in grief and pain.  
 How might he be dishonored more?  
 His feet, alas, grieved him so sore  
 That on them he might no longer go.

And from his eyes the blood gan flow  
That uneath with them could he see.  
He durst not stay; he could not flee.  
One that Otram Longfoot hight  
Seized a horned stake and with might  
Thrust it into Bruin's eyes.  
Whereat Dame Fulmart likewise  
Fetched with a stave a fearsome thwack.  
Dame Bave and one Abel Quack  
Fell under foot and strove amain  
Possession of a stick to gain.  
Longnosed Ludolf therewithal  
Placed in his sling a leaden ball  
And wildly round about him flang.  
Crookfingered master Bartold sprang  
Ahead of all to lead the van  
By reason he was the bestborn man  
Out-taken Lamfreit alone. . . .

It was by the river's brim  
That woefulest beast Bruin, him,  
Was ringed about by village folk.  
In that parley was little spoke,  
But one him thrusts and one him thwacks;  
Sharpest of all was Lamfreit's axe.  
Thus did they Bruin much torment.  
And all that to him was sent  
He sat, and looked about, and took.  
The priest let drive his crozier crook  
That oft his neck it smote upon.  
And the sacristan ever anon  
Wielding his banner made great play.  
Lamfreit was foremost in the fray,  
Who at the same time, with a will,  
Struck him with a hard, sharp bill  
So betwixt the neck and head  
That he was wholly bewild'red;  
And he leaped up from the blow,  
Between the river and a hedge-row,  
Amidst the old wives' company;  
And of them five thus tumbled he  
Into the river that ran beside,  
Which was there well deep and wide.  
Of these the priest's wife was one,

And his joy it was clean done  
 When he his wife saw in the brook.  
 Then his lust him all forsook  
 To rain on Bruin thrust and blow.  
 Cried he, "My worthy parishens, lo!  
 Dame Julocke floats on yonder half,  
 With her spindle and her distaff.  
 Now to it, he who help her may!  
 I give him a year and a day  
 Full pardon and absolution  
 For evil deed that he has done! "

Both the old wives and the men  
 Left the wretched caitiff, then,  
 Bruin lying as for dead,  
 And even as the priest had said,  
 With hooks and ropes they set about.  
 And while the goodwives they drew out  
 Bruin plunged in without stay  
 And from them all swam clear away.  
 The folk were wroth, as ye may know;  
 They saw Bruin scaped so  
 Whither none might follow him;  
 In rage they stood on the river's brim  
 And scorned him as he went from sight.

Translated by Harry Morgan Ayres

## THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

THE puritanic austerity that Maerlant cultivated in his later years proved the leaven of a religious revival in the Netherlands which found its noblest expression in the prose writings of the Dutch mystics. Jan van Ruusbroec was the greatest of these. Doctor Ecstaticus was the name by which he was known in the medieval world of learning. Still, learning was not the source from which his wisdom flowed. Maeterlinck has said of him that he combined the ignorance of a child with the knowledge of one who has come back from the dead. "When he speaks of his little monastery garden he has trouble in telling us distinctly what happens there; then he writes like a child. But when he undertakes to teach us what happens in God, he writes pages such as Plato could not have written. This monk possessed one of the wisest, most accurate, and subtlest philosophic intellects that ever existed. He knew no Greek and perhaps not even Latin. And yet his ignorant and simple

soul received, unconsciously, the dazzling reflections from all the solitary and mysterious summits of human thought. His ignorance rediscovered the wisdom of buried ages and foresaw the knowledge of ages yet unborn.”<sup>1</sup>

Ruusbroec is not easy to read. For the Brabant language in which he wrote had never been employed to express such thoughts and visions as Ruusbroec brought back from his ecstatic flights into the unknown. Words and phrases with which his people were wont to reproduce their workaday world became symbols of a transcendental experience that defied portrayal in speech. The unknown can only be expressed in terms of our knowledge, hence Ruusbroec had to rely on images and similes to paint the mysteries of the invisible. Maeterlinck, who recognized in Ruusbroec l'Admirable, as he called him, one of the greatest mystics of all times, has rendered one of his works into French, 'L'Ornement des Noces Spirituelles.' Human nature is the bride to whom the Master of Truth has spoken, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." The meeting of the bridegroom, the Christian's personal communion with God, is the sole aim of the mystic, and by what stages the aspirant to that bliss must travel from the active to the contemplative life is the essence of Ruusbroec's teaching.

He was born in 1294, not far from Brussels, in the village from which he took his name. For thirty-five years he officiated as chaplain in the Church of Ste-Gudule at Brussels. Then, at the age of sixty, he retired with a colleague to Groenendael, in the solitude of the forest of Soignes. There, having gathered others around them, they founded a house where they lived according to the rule of St. Austin, Ruusbroec being the prior of the brotherhood. And there as Prior of Groenendael he died in 1381, at the age of eighty-seven, revered by his brethren as a great and holy master.

One of the many visitors who came to see Ruusbroec at Groenendael was Geert Groote of Deventer, the founder of the Brotherhood of the Common Life. Groote, though mystically inclined, never lost touch with the actual life of every day. Ruusbroec's visions were the ecstatic experiences of an individualist who found peace for his soul on the mountain tops of thought; Groote found that peace by preaching the love of God and the boon of prayer to the people in the lowlands of active life. He was born forty-six years later than Ruusbroec and he died only three years after him, but during his short career he accomplished much that had a far-reaching effect upon the spiritual future of the Netherlands and on the trend of religious thought in western Europe. The Brotherhood that he founded in his native town of Deventer inaugurated a reform movement in school education which played its part in the rise of humanistic learning. Thomas à Kempis and, after him, Erasmus were pupils of the Deventer School. Thomas lived for a time in the house of the Brethren; from Florentius Radewijns, the leader of the Brotherhood after the death of the founder, he heard the story of Geert Groote's life, and, expert pen-

<sup>1</sup> M. Maeterlinck: 'Le Trésor des Humbles,' p. 103.

man as he was, he copied many a manuscript containing the teachings of the founder. Among these were the chapters that form the nucleus of the 'Imitatio Christi,' which has aptly been called the gospel of the "Devotio Moderna."

Modern scholarship has proved beyond a doubt that Thomas à Kempis has no right to the name of author of the 'Imitatio.' That great little book is a composite work less expressive of an individual than a communal devotion, the purest and noblest record of that inner experience which the mystics of the Yssel Valley regarded as the real life. The first of the four books into which the 'Imitatio' is divided consists of three distinct parts. The first of these, consisting of the initial sixteen chapters, is addressed to all Christians, whereas the two others, chapters 17-23 and 24-25, are intended for such readers as have chosen a monastic life, especially for the members of Groote's Brotherhood. The nucleus of the 'Imitatio' is to be found in the second and third books. A German scholar, Dr. Paul Hagen, has brought to light an older version of this part in Middle Low German translation. It bears the same title that heads the second book of the 'Imitatio': 'Vormaninge de dar Tein to Binnenwendigen Dingen' [Admonitions Tending to Things Internal], but lacks twelve complete chapters of the third book and numerous shorter passages at various places. It might be, of course, that this Low German text was an extract from the 'Imitation,' but the internal evidence is all against this supposition. Two distinctly different personalities are revealed to us by that part of Thomas à Kempis' book that corresponds with the Low German version and by the chapters and passages not found in the latter. These must be additions to the original work, which the Low German version has preserved intact. Profound, earnest cogency and consistent adherence to his theme are characteristic of its author, whereas the interpolator was an emotional man without the other's self-restraint and logic. His additions swarm with invocations of God and with a profusion of elusive verbiage. The original author seldom varies his manner of addressing the Deity: Lord, Lord God, Lord my God, Lord Jesus. But the writer of the additions ransacks his vocabulary for exuberant phrases to express the fullness of his love and adoration: Lord God, My Holy Lover, My Love, My Beloved, Thou O Sweetest One, Source of Eternal Love, Strongest God of Israel, Friend of Faithful Souls, My Most Dearly Beloved Bridegroom, Purest Lover, Ruler of the Entire Creation, Comfort of the Pilgrim Souls, Inexpressible Sweetness, Eternal Light, Just Father Forever to be Praised, Heavenly Healer of Souls, Father of Mercy.

Now, these very same modes of invocation recur with monotonous frequency in the authentic writings of Thomas à Kempis. It was he who translated into Latin the original Dutch treatise preserved in a Low German rendering, added several chapters and a third book to this older work and prefixed to the whole a series of three devotional tracts which he turned into the first book of his compilation. Dr. Albert Hyma, of the University of Michigan, who

is the chief authority in this country on Geert Groote and his Brotherhood, agrees with Dr. Paul Hagen that Thomas' additions are not only inferior in style to the original, but also detract from its consistency by the introduction of contradictory matter and frequent deviations from the author's course of thought. Dr. Hyma is the editor of the most recent English version of the 'Imitation of Christ,'<sup>2</sup> and in it he has drawn the inevitable conclusions to which he was forced by Dr. Paul Hagen's discovery. The name of Thomas à Kempis is not mentioned on the title page and those chapters of the Second and Third Books that are not found in the Low German version are omitted from his context. Thus Thomas à Kempis' famous little book is stripped of his own share in it. "However," says Dr. Hyma, "one need not feel that one commits sacrilege in eliminating his additions. The 'Imitation' proper was produced in the house of the Brethren of the Common Life in Deventer. In this house all the great mystical productions of the 'Devotio Moderna' originated. In this city Groote had lived and died. Here Thomas à Kempis himself imbibed the teachings of the great master, and here he found the writings of Groote and his disciples, as he testified himself. . . . The 'Imitation of Christ' contains the teachings of Groote in the same way as the four Gospels in the New Testament contain the sayings of Jesus of Nazareth. . . . The real creator of the 'Imitation,' according to the latest theories, is Gerard Groote of Deventer, founder of the Brethren of the Common Life and originator of the religious revival named 'Devotio Moderna.'"

A. J. BARNOUW

## OF THE WONDERFUL EFFECT OF DIVINE LOVE

From the 'Imitation of Christ'

LOVE is a great thing, a great good indeed, which alone makes light all that is burdensome, and bears with even mind all that is uneven. For it carries a burthen without being burthened; and it makes all that which is bitter sweet and savory.

The love of Jesus is noble, and spurs us on to do great things, and excites us to desire always things more perfect.

Love desires to have its abode above, and not to be kept back by things below.

Love desires to be at liberty and estranged from all worldly affection, lest its inner view be hindered, lest it suffer itself to be entangled through some temporal interest, or give way through mishap. . . .

Nothing is sweeter than love; nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing

<sup>2</sup> Published by the Century Co., New York and London.

broader, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven and in earth; for love is born of God, and can rest only in God above all things created.

The lover flies, runs, and rejoices; he is free and not held.

He gives all for all and has all in all, because he rests in One supreme above all, from whom all good flows and proceeds.

He looks not at the gifts, but turns himself above all goods to the Giver.

Love often knows no measure, but warmly glows above all measure.

Love feels no burthen, regards not labors, would willingly do more than it is able, pleads not impossibility, because it feels sure that it can and may do all things.

It is able therefore to do all things; and it makes good many deficiencies, and frees many things for being carried out, where he who loves not faints and lies down.

Love watches, and sleeping, slumbers not; weary, is not tired; straitened, is not constrained; frightened, is not disturbed; but like a living flame and a burning torch, it bursts forth upwards and safely overpasses all.

Whosoever loves knows the cry of this voice.

A loud cry in the ears of God is that ardent affection of the soul which says, My God, my love, thou art all mine and I am all thine.

Enlarge me in thy love, that I may learn to taste with the inner mouth of the heart how sweet it is to love, and to be dissolved and swim in a sea of love.

Let me be possessed by love, going above myself through excess of fervor and awe.

Let me sing the song of love; let me follow thee, my beloved, on high; let my soul lose herself in thy praises, exulting in love.

Let me love thee more than myself, and myself only for thee, and all in thee who truly love thee, as the law of love which shines forth from thee commands. . . .

Love is swift, sincere, pious, pleasant, and delightful; strong, patient, faithful, prudent, long-suffering, manly, and never seeking itself; for where a man seeks himself, there he falls from love. . . .

Love is circumspect, humble, and upright; not soft, not light, not intent upon vain things; sober, chaste, steadfast, quiet, and guarded in all its senses.

Love is submissive and obedient to superiors; mean and contemptible in its own eyes; devout and ever giving thanks to God; always trusting and hoping in him, even when it tastes not the relish of God's sweetness — for there is no living in love without pain.

Whosoever is not ready to suffer all things, and to stand resigned to the will of the beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover.

He who loves must willingly embrace all that is hard and bitter, for the sake of the beloved.

OF THE DESIRE OF ETERNAL LIFE, AND HOW GREAT ARE  
THE BENEFITS PROMISED TO THEM THAT FIGHT

From the 'Imitation of Christ'

**S**ON, when thou perceivest the desire of eternal bliss to be infused into thee from above, and thou wouldst fain go out of the tabernacle of this body, that thou mightest contemplate My brightness without any shadow of change — enlarge thy heart, and receive this holy inspiration with thy whole desire.

Return the greatest thanks to the Supreme Goodness, which dealeth so condescendingly with thee, mercifully visiteth thee, ardently inciteth thee, and powerfully raiseth thee up, lest by thy own weight thou fall down to the things of earth.

For it is not by thy own thoughtfulness or endeavor that thou receivest this, but by the mere condescension of heavenly grace and Divine regard; that so thou mayest advance in virtues and greater humility, and prepare thyself for future conflicts, and labor with the whole affection of thy heart to keep close to Me, and serve Me with a fervent will.

Son, the fire often burneth, but the flame ascendeth not without smoke.

And so the desires of some are on fire after heavenly things, and yet they are not free from the temptation of carnal affection.

Therefore is it not altogether purely for God's honor that they act, when they so earnestly petition Him.

Such also is oftentimes thy desire, which thou hast professed to be so importunate.

For that is not pure and perfect which is alloyed with self-interest.

Ask not that which is pleasant and convenient, but that which is acceptable to Me and for My honor; for if thou judgest rightly, thou oughtest to prefer and to follow My appointment rather than thine own desire or any other desirable thing.

I know thy desire, and I have often heard thy groanings.

Thou wouldst wish to be already in the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

Now doth the eternal dwelling, and the heavenly country full of festivity, delight thee.

But that hour is not yet come; for there is yet another time, a time of war, a time of labor and of probation.

Thou desirest to be filled with the Sovereign Good, but thou canst not at present attain to it.

I am He: wait for Me, saith the Lord, until the kingdom of God come.

Thou hast yet to be tried upon earth and exercised in many things.

Consolation shall sometimes be given thee, but abundant satiety shall not be granted thee.

Take courage, therefore, and be valiant, as well in doing as in suffering things repugnant to nature.

Thou must put on the new man, and be changed into another person.

That which thou wouldst not, thou must oftentimes do; and that which thou wouldst, thou must leave undone.

What pleaseth others shall prosper, what is pleasing to thee shall not succeed.

What others say shall be hearkened to; what thou sayest shall be reckoned as naught.

Others shall ask, and shall receive; thou shalt ask, and not obtain.

Others shall be great in the esteem of men; about thee nothing shall be said.

To others this or that shall be committed; but thou shalt be accounted as of no use.

At this, nature will sometimes repine, and it will be a great matter if thou bear it with silence.

In these, and many such-like things, the faithful servant of the Lord is wont to be tried how far he can deny and break himself in all things.

There is scarce anything in which thou standest so much in need of dying to thyself as in seeing and suffering things that are contrary to thy will, and more especially when those things are commanded which seem to thee inconvenient and of little use.

And because, being under authority, thou darest not resist the higher power, therefore it seemeth to thee hard to walk at the beck of another, and wholly to give up thy own opinion.

But consider, son, the fruit of these labors, their speedy termination, and their reward exceeding great; and thou wilt not hence derive affliction, but the most strengthening consolation in thy suffering.

For in regard to that little of thy will which thou now willingly forsakest, thou shalt forever have thy will in heaven.

For there thou shalt find all that thou willest, all that thou canst desire.

There shall be to thee the possession of every good, without fear of losing it.

There thy will, always one with Me, shall not covet any extraneous or private thing. There no one shall resist thee, no one complain of thee, no one obstruct thee, nothing shall stand in thy way; but every desirable good shall be present at the same moment, shall replenish all thy affections and satiate them to the full.

There I will give thee glory for the contumely thou hast suffered; a garment of praise for thy sorrow; and for having been seated here in the lowest place, the throne of My kingdom forever.

There will the fruit of obedience appear, there will the labor of penance rejoice, and humble subjection shall be gloriously crowned.

Now, therefore, bow thyself down humbly under the hands of all, and heed not who it was that said or commanded this.

But let it be thy great care, that whether thy superior or inferior or equal require anything of thee, or hint at anything, thou take all in good part, and labor with a sincere will to perform it.

Let one seek this, another that; let this man glory in this thing, another in that, and be praised a thousand thousand times: but thou, for thy part, rejoice neither in this nor in that, but in the contempt of thyself, and in My good pleasure and honor alone.

This is what thou hast to wish for, that whether in life or in death, God may be always glorified in thee.

#### THAT A MAN SHOULD NOT BE TOO MUCH DEJECTED, EVEN WHEN HE FALLETH INTO SOME DEFECTS

From the 'Imitation of Christ'

**M**Y son, patience and humility in adversities are more pleasing to Me, than much comfort and devotion when things go well. Why art thou so grieved for every little matter spoken against thee?

Although it had been much more, thou oughtest not to have been moved.

But now let it pass: it is not the first that hath happened, nor is it anything new; neither shall it be the last, if thou live long.

Thou art courageous enough, so long as nothing adverse befalleth thee.

Thou canst give good counsel also, and canst strengthen others with thy words; but when any tribulation suddenly comes to thy door, thou failest in counsel and in strength.

Observe then thy great frailty, of which thou too often hast experience in small occurrences.

It is notwithstanding intended for thy good, when these and such-like trials happen to thee.

Put it out of thy heart the best thou canst; and if tribulation have touched thee, yet let it not cast thee down nor long perplex thee.

Bear it at least patiently, if thou canst not joyfully.

Although thou be unwilling to hear it, and conceivest indignation thereat, yet restrain thyself, and suffer no inordinate word to pass out of thy mouth, whereby [Christ's] little ones may be offended.

The storm which is now raised shall quickly be appeased, and inward grief shall be sweetened by the return of grace.

Be more patient of soul, and gird thyself to greater endurance.

All is not lost, although thou do feel thyself very often afflicted or grievously tempted.

Thou art a man, and not God; thou art flesh, not an angel.

How canst thou look to continue alway in the same state or virtue, when an angel in heaven hath fallen, as also the first man in Paradise?

# THE SCHOLAR AND HIS PUBLIC

## ALCUIN

**A**LCUIN, usually called Alcuin of York, came of a patrician family of Northumberland. Neither the date nor the place of his birth is known with definiteness, but he was born about 735 at or near York. As a child he entered the cathedral school recently founded by Egbert, Archbishop of York, and ultimately became its most eminent pupil. He was subsequently assistant master to Ælbert, its head; and when Ælbert succeeded to the archbishopric on the death of Egbert in 766, Alcuin became *scholasticus* or master of the school. On the death of Ælbert in 780, Alcuin was placed in charge of the cathedral library, the most famous in Western Europe. In his longest poem, 'Versus de Eboracensi Ecclesia' [Poem on the Saints of the Church at York], he has left an important record of his connection with York. This poem, written before he left England, is, like most of his verse, in dactylic hexameters. To a certain extent it follows Vergil as a model, and is partly based on the writings of Bede, partly on his own personal experience. It is not only valuable for its historical bearings, but for its disclosure of the manner and matter of instruction in the schools of the time, and the contents of the great library. As master of the cathedral school, Alcuin acquired name and fame at home and abroad, and was soon the most celebrated teacher in Britain. Before 766, in company with Ælbert, he made his first journey to Germany, and may have visited Rome. Earlier than 780 he was again abroad, and at Pavia came under the notice of Charlemagne, who was on his way back from Italy. In 781 Eanbald, the new Archbishop of York, sent Alcuin to Rome to bring back the Archbishop's pallium. At Parma he again met Charlemagne, who invited him to take up his abode at the Frankish court. With the consent of his king and his archbishop he resigned his position at York, and with a few pupils departed for the court at Aachen, in 782.

Alcuin's arrival in Germany was the beginning of a new intellectual epoch among the Franks. Learning was at this time in a deplorable state. The older monastic and cathedral schools had been broken up, and the monasteries themselves often unworthily bestowed upon royal favorites. There had been a palace school for rudimentary instruction, but it was wholly inefficient and unimportant.

During the years immediately following his arrival, Alcuin zealously labored at his projects of educational reform. First reorganizing the palace school, he

afterward undertook a reform of the monasteries and their system of instruction, and the establishment of new schools throughout the kingdom of Charlemagne. At the court school the great king himself, as well as Liutgard the queen, became his pupil. Gisela, Abbess of Chelles, the sister of Charlemagne, came also to him for instruction, as did the Princes Charles, Pepin, and Louis, and the Princesses Rotrud and Gisela. On himself and the others, in accordance with the fashion of the time, Alcuin bestowed fanciful names. He was Flaccus or Albinus, Charlemagne was David, the queen was Ava, and Pepin was Julius. The subjects of instruction in this school, the center of culture of the kingdom, were first of all, grammar; then arithmetic, astronomy, rhetoric, and dialectic. The king himself studied poetry, astronomy, arithmetic, the writings of the Fathers, and theology proper. It was under the influence of Alcuin that Charlemagne issued in 787 the capitulary that has been called "the first general charter of education for the Middle Ages." It reproves the abbots for their illiteracy, and exhorts them to the study of letters; and although its effect was less than its purpose, it served, with subsequent decrees of the king, to stimulate learning and literature throughout all Germany.

Alcuin's system included, besides the palace school, and the monastic and cathedral schools, which in some instances gave both elementary and superior instruction, all the parish or village elementary schools, whose head was the parish priest.

In 790, seeing his plans well established, Alcuin returned to York bearing letters of reconciliation to Offa, King of Mercia, between whom and Charlemagne dissension had arisen. Having accomplished his errand he went back to the German court in 792. Here his first act was to take a vigorous part in the furious controversy respecting the doctrine of Adoptionism. Alcuin not only wrote against the heresy, but brought about its condemnation by the Council of Frankfort, in 794.

Two years later, at his own request, he was made Abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Martin, at Tours. Not contented with reforming the lax monastic life, he resolved to make Tours a seat of learning. Under his management, it presently became the most renowned school in the kingdom. Especially in the copying of manuscripts did the brethren excel. Alcuin kept up a vast correspondence with Britain as well as with different parts of the Frankish kingdom; and of the two hundred and thirty letters preserved, the greater part belong to this time. In 799, at Aachen, he held a public disputation on Adoptionism with Felix, Bishop of Urgel, who was wholly vanquished. When the king, in 800, was preparing for that visit to the Papal court which was to end with his coronation as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, he invited Alcuin to accompany him. But the old man, wearied with many burdens, could not make the journey. By the beginning of 804 he had become much enfeebled. It was his desire, often expressed, to die on the day of Pentecost.

His wish was fulfilled, for he died at dawn on the 19th of May. He was buried in the Cloister Church of St. Martin, near the monastery.

Alcuin's literary activity was exerted in various directions. Two thirds of all that he wrote was theological in character. These works are exegetical, like the 'Commentary on the Gospel of St. John'; dogmatic, like the 'Writings against Felix of Urgel and Elipandus of Toledo,' his best work of this class; or liturgical and moral, like the 'Lives of the Saints.' The other third is made up of the epistles, already mentioned; of poems on a great variety of subjects, the principal one being the "Poem on the Saints of the Church at York"; and of those didactic works which form his principal claim to attention at the present day. His educational treatises are the following: 'On Grammar,' 'On Orthography,' 'On Rhetoric and the Virtues,' 'On Dialectics,' 'Disputation between the Royal and Most Noble Youth Pepin and Albinus the Scholastic,' and 'On the Calculation of Easter.' The most important of all these writings is his 'Grammar,' which consists of two parts: the first a dialogue between a teacher and his pupils on philosophy and studies in general; the other a dialogue between a teacher, a young Frank, and a young Saxon, on grammar. These latter, in Alcuin's language, have "but lately rushed upon the thorny thickets of grammatical density." Grammar begins with the consideration of the letters, the vowels and consonants, the former of which "are, as it were, the souls, and the consonants the bodies of words." Grammar itself is defined to be "the science of written sounds, the guardian of correct speaking and writing. It is founded on nature, reason, authority, and custom." He enumerates no less than twenty-six parts of grammar, which he then defines. Many of his definitions and particularly his etymologies, are remarkable. He tells us that feet in poetry are so called "because the meters walk on them"; *littera* is derived from *legitera*, "since the *littera* serve to prepare the way for readers" [*legere, iter*]. In his 'Orthography,' a pendent to the 'Grammar,' *cœlebs*, a bachelor, is "one who is on his way *ad cœlum*" [to heaven]. Alcuin's 'Grammar' is based principally on Donatus. In this, as in all his works, he compiles and adapts, but is only rarely original. 'On Rhetoric and the Virtues' is a dialogue between Charlemagne and Albinus [Alcuin]. The 'Disputation between Pepin and Albinus,' the beginning of which is here given, shows both the manner and the subject-matter of his instruction. Alcuin, with all the limitations which his environment imposed upon him, stamped himself indelibly upon his day and generation, and left behind him, in his scholars, an enduring influence. Men like Rabanus, the famous Bishop of Mayence, gloried in having been his pupil, and down to the wars and devastations of the tenth century his influence upon education was paramount throughout all Western Europe.

WILLIAM H. CARPENTER

## A LETTER FROM ALCUIN TO CHARLEMAGNE

(Written in the year 796)

**I** YOUR Flaccus, in accordance with your entreaty and your gracious kindness, am busied under the shelter of St. Martin's, in bestowing upon many of my pupils the honey of the Holy Scriptures. I am eager that others should drink deep of the old wine of ancient learning; I shall presently begin to nourish still others with the fruits of grammatical ingenuity; and some of them I am eager to enlighten with a knowledge of the order of the stars, that seem painted, as it were, on the dome of some mighty palace. I have become all things to all men (1 Cor. i, 22) so that I may train up many to the profession of God's Holy Church and to the glory of your imperial realm, lest the grace of Almighty God in me should be fruitless (1 Cor. xv, 10) and your munificent bounty of no avail. But your servant lacks the rarer books of scholastic learning, which in my own country I used to have (thanks to the generous and most devoted care of my teacher and to my own humble endeavors), and I mention it to your Majesty so that, perchance, it may please you who are eagerly concerned about the whole body of learning, to have me despatch some of our young men to procure for us certain necessary works, and bring with them to France the flowers of England; so that a graceful garden may not exist in York alone, but so that at Tours as well there may be found the blossoming of Paradise with its abundant fruits; that the south wind, when it comes, may cause the gardens along the River Loire to burst into bloom, and their perfumed airs to stream forth, and finally, that which follows in the Canticle, whence I have drawn this simile, may be brought to pass. . . . (Canticle v, 1, 2). Or even this exhortation of the prophet Isaiah, which urges us to acquire wisdom: — "All ye who thirst, come to the waters; and you who have not money, hasten, buy and eat; come, without money and without price, and buy wine and milk" (Isaiah iv, 1).

And this is a thing which your gracious zeal will not overlook: how upon every page of the Holy Scriptures we are urged to the acquisition of wisdom; how nothing is more honorable for insuring a happy life, nothing more pleasing in the observance, nothing more efficient against sin, nothing more praiseworthy in any lofty station, than that men live according to the teachings of the philosophers. Moreover, nothing is more essential to the government of the people, nothing better for the guidance of life into the paths of honorable character, than the grace which wisdom gives, and the glory of training and the power of learning. Therefore it is that in its praise, Solomon, the wisest of all men, exclaims, "Better is wisdom than all precious things, and more to be desired" (Prov. viii, 11 *seq*). To secure this with every possible effort and to get possession of it by daily endeavor, do you, my lord King, exhort the

young men who are in your Majesty's palace, that they strive for this in the flower of their youth, so that they may be deemed worthy to live through an old age of honor, and that by its means they may be able to attain to everlasting happiness. I, myself, according to my disposition, shall not be slothful in sowing the seeds of wisdom among your servants in this land, being mindful of the injunction, "Sow thy seed in the morning, and at eventide let not thy hand cease; since thou knowest not what will spring up, whether these or those, and if both together, still better is it" (Eccles. xi, 6). In the morning of my life and in the fruitful period of my studies I sowed seed in Britain, and now that my blood has grown cool in the evening of life, I still cease not; but sow the seed in France, desiring that both may spring up by the grace of God. And now that my body has grown weak, I find consolation in the saying of St. Jerome, who declares in his letter to Nepotianus, "Almost all the powers of the body are altered in old men, and wisdom alone will increase while the rest decay." And a little further he says, "The old age of those who have adorned their youth with noble accomplishments and have meditated on the law of the Lord both day and night becomes more and more deeply accomplished with its years, more polished from experience, more wise by the lapse of time; and it reaps the sweetest fruit of ancient learning." In this letter in praise of wisdom, one who wishes can read many things of the scientific pursuits of the ancients, and can understand how eager were these ancients to abound in the grace of wisdom. I have noted that your zeal, which is pleasing to God and praiseworthy, is always advancing toward this wisdom and takes pleasure in it, and that you are adorning the magnificence of your worldly rule with still greater intellectual splendor. In this may our Lord Jesus Christ, who is himself the supreme type of divine wisdom, guard you and exalt you, and cause you to attain to the glory of His own blessed and everlasting vision.

## ABÉLARD

**P**IERRE, the eldest son of Bérenger and Lucie (Abélard?) was born at Palais, near Nantes and the frontier of Brittany, in 1079. His knightly father, having in his youth been a student, was anxious to give his family, and especially his favorite Pierre, a liberal education. The boy was accordingly sent to school, under a teacher who at that time was making his mark in the world — Roscellin, the reputed father of Nominalism. As the whole import and tragedy of his life may be traced back to this man's teaching, and the relation which it bore to the thought of the time, we must pause to consider these.

In the early centuries of our era, the two fundamental articles of the Gentile-Christian creed, the Trinity and the Incarnation, neither of them Jewish, were

formulated in terms of Platonic philosophy, of which the distinctive tenet is, that the real and eternal is the universal, not the individual. On this assumption it was possible to say that the same real substance could exist in three, or indeed in any number of persons. In the case of God, the dogma-builders were careful to say, essence is one with existence, and therefore in Him the individuals are as real as the universal. Platonism, having lent the formula for the Trinity, became the favorite philosophy of many of the Church fathers, and so introduced into Christian thought and life the Platonic dualism, that sharp distinction between the temporal and eternal which belittles the practical life and glorifies the contemplative.

This distinction, as aggravated by Neo-Platonism, further affected Eastern Christianity in the sixth century, and Western Christianity in the ninth, chiefly through the writings of (the pseudo) Dionysius Areopagita, and gave rise to Christian mysticism. It was then erected into a rule of conduct through the efforts of Pope Gregory VII, who strove to subject practical and civil life entirely to the control of ecclesiastics and monks, standing for contemplative, supernatural life. The latter included all purely mental work, which more and more tended to concentrate itself upon religion and confine itself to the clergy. In this way it came to be considered an utter disgrace for any man engaged in mental work to take any part in the institutions of civil life, and particularly to marry. He might indeed enter into illicit relations, and rear a family of "nephews" and "nieces," without losing prestige; but to marry was to commit suicide. Such was the condition of things in the days of Abélard.

But while Platonism, with its real universals, was celebrating its ascetic, unearthly triumphs in the West, Aristotelianism, which maintains that the individual is the real, was making its way in the East. Banished as heresy beyond the limits of the Catholic Church, in the fifth and sixth centuries, in the persons of Nestorius and others, it took refuge in Syria, where it flourished for many years in the schools of Edessa and Nisibis, the foremost of the time. From these it found its way among the Arabs, and even to the illiterate Muhammad, who gave it (1) theoretic theological expression in the cxii surah of the Koran: "He is One God, God the Eternal; He neither begets nor is begotten; and to Him there is no peer," in which both the fundamental dogmas of Christianity are denied, and that too on the ground of revelation; (2) practical expression, by forbidding asceticism and monasticism, and encouraging a robust, though somewhat coarse, natural life. Islam, indeed, was an attempt to rehabilitate the human.

In Abélard's time Arab Aristotelianism, with its consequences for thought and life, was filtering into Europe and forcing Christian thinkers to defend the bases of their faith. Since these, so far as defensible at all, depended upon the Platonic doctrine of universals, and this could be maintained only by dialectic, this science became extremely popular — indeed, almost the rage.

Little of the real Aristotle was at that time known in the West; but in Porphyry's Introduction to Aristotle's Logic was a famous passage, in which all the difficulties with regard to universals were stated without being solved. Over this the intellectual battles of the first age of Scholasticism were fought. The more clerical and mystic thinkers, like Anselm and Bernard, of course sided with Plato; but the more worldly, robust thinkers inclined to accept Aristotle, not seeing that his doctrine is fatal to the Trinity.

Prominent among these was a Breton, Roscellin, the early instructor of Abélard. From him the brilliant, fearless boy learnt two terrible lessons: (1) that universals, instead of being real substances, external and superior to individual things, are mere names (hence Nominalism) for common qualities of things as recognized by the human mind; (2) that since universals are the tools and criteria of thought, the human mind, in which alone these exist, is the judge of all truth — a lesson which leads directly to pure rationalism, and indeed to the rehabilitation of the human as against the superhuman. No wonder that Roscellin came into conflict with the Church authorities, and had to flee to England. Abélard afterward modified his Nominalism and behaved somewhat unhandsomely to him, but never escaped from the influence of his teaching. Abélard was a rationalist and an asserter of the human. Accordingly, when, definitely adopting the vocation of the scholar, he went to Paris to study dialectic under the then famous William of Champeaux, a declared Platonist, or realist as the designation then was, he gave his teacher infinite trouble by his subtle objections, and not seldom got the better of him.

These victories, which made him disliked both by his teacher and his fellow-pupils, went to increase his natural self-appreciation, and induced him, though a mere youth, to leave William and set up a rival school at Mélnun. Here his splendid personality, his confidence, and his brilliant powers of reasoning and statement, drew to him a large number of admiring pupils, so that he was soon induced to move his school to Corbeil, near Paris, where his impetuous dialectic found a wider field. Here he worked so hard that he fell ill, and was compelled to return home to his family. With them he remained for several years, devoting himself to study — not only of dialectic, but plainly also of theology. Returning to Paris, he went to study rhetoric under his old enemy, William of Champeaux, who had meanwhile, to increase his prestige, taken holy orders, and had been made bishop of Châlons. The old feud was renewed, and Abélard, being now better armed than before, compelled his master openly to withdraw from his extreme realistic position with regard to universals, and assume one more nearly approaching that of Aristotle.

This victory greatly diminished the fame of William, and increased that of Abélard; so that when the former left his chair and appointed a successor, the latter gave way to Abélard and became his pupil (1113). This was too much for William, who removed his successor, and so forced Abélard to retire again to Mélnun. Here he remained but a short time; for, William

having on account of unpopularity removed his school from Paris Abélard returned thither and opened a school outside the city, on Mont Ste. Gèneviève. William, hearing this, returned to Paris and tried to put him down, but in vain. Abélard was completely victorious.

After a time he returned once more to Palais, to see his mother, who was about to enter the cloister, as his father had done some time before. When this visit was over, instead of returning to Paris, to lecture on dialectic, he went to Laon to study theology under the then famous Anselm. Here, convinced of the showy superficiality of Anselm, he once more got into difficulty, by undertaking to expound a chapter of Ezekiel without having studied it under any teacher. Though at first derided by his fellow-students, he succeeded so well as to draw a crowd of them to hear him, and so excited the envy of Anselm that the latter forbade him to teach in Laon. Abélard accordingly returned once more to Paris, convinced that he was fit to shine as a lecturer, not only on dialectic, but also on theology. And his audiences thought so also; for his lectures on Ezekiel were very popular and drew crowds. He was now at the height of his fame (1118).

The result of all these triumphs over dialecticians and theologians was unfortunate. He not only felt himself the intellectual superior of any living man, which he probably was, but he also began to look down upon the current thought of his time as obsolete and unworthy, and to set at naught even current opinion. He was now on the verge of forty, and his life had so far been one of spotless purity; but now, under the influence of vanity, this too gave way. Having no further conquests to make in the intellectual world, he began to consider whether, with his great personal beauty, manly bearing, and confident address, he might not make conquests in the social world, and arrived at the conclusion that no woman could reject him or refuse him her favor.

It was just at this unfortunate juncture that he went to live in the house of a certain Canon Fulbert, of the cathedral, whose brilliant niece, Héloïse, had at the age of seventeen just returned from a convent at Argenteuil, where she had been at school. Fulbert, who was proud of her talents, and glad to get the price of Abélard's board, took the latter into his house and intrusted him with the full care of Héloïse's further education, telling him even to chastise her if necessary. So complete was Fulbert's confidence in Abélard, that no restriction was put upon the companionship of teacher and pupil. The result was that Abélard and Héloïse, both equally inexperienced in matters of the heart, soon conceived for each other an overwhelming passion, comparable only to that of Faust and Gretchen. And the result in both cases was the same. Abélard, as a great scholar, could not think of marriage; and if he had, Héloïse would have refused to ruin his career by marrying him. So it came to pass that when their secret, never very carefully guarded, became no longer a secret, and threatened the safety of Héloïse, the only thing that her lover

could do for her was to carry her off secretly to his home in Palais, and place her in charge of his sister. Here she remained until the birth of her child, which received the name of Astralabius, Abélard meanwhile continuing his work in Paris. And here all the nobility of his character comes out. Though Fulbert and his friends were, naturally enough, furious at what they regarded as his utter treachery, and though they tried to murder him, he protected himself, and as soon as Héloïse was fit to travel, hastened to Palais, and insisted upon removing her to Paris and making her his lawful wife. Héloïse used every argument which her fertile mind could suggest to dissuade him from a step which she felt must be his ruin, at the same time expressing her entire willingness to stand in a less honored relation to him. But Abélard was inexorable. Taking her to Paris, he procured the consent of her relatives to the marriage (which they agreed to keep secret), and even their presence at the ceremony, which was performed one morning before daybreak, after the two had spent a night of vigils in the church.

After the marriage they parted, and for some time saw little of each other. When Héloïse's relatives divulged the secret, and she was taxed with being Abélard's lawful wife, she "anathematized and swore that it was absolutely false." As the facts were too patent, however, Abélard removed her from Paris, and placed her in the convent at Argenteuil, where she had been educated. Here she assumed the garb of a novice. Her relatives, thinking that he must have done this in order to rid himself of her, furiously vowed vengeance, which they took in the meanest and most brutal form of personal violence. It was not a time of fine sensibilities, justice, or mercy; but even the public of those days was horrified, and gave expression to its horror. Abélard, overwhelmed with shame, despair, and remorse, could now think of nothing better than to abandon the world. Without any vocation, as he well knew, he assumed the monkish habit and retired to the monastery of St. Denis, while Héloïse, by his order, took the veil at Argenteuil. Her devotion and heroism on this occasion Abélard has described in touching terms. Thus supernaturalism had done its worst for these two strong, impetuous human souls.

If Abélard had entered the cloister in the hope of finding peace, he soon discovered his mistake. The dissolute life of the monks utterly disgusted him, while the clergy stormed him with petitions to continue his lectures. Yielding to these, he was soon again surrounded by crowds of students — so great that the monks at St. Denis were glad to get rid of him. He accordingly retired to a lonely cell, to which he was followed by more admirers than could find shelter or food. As the schools of Paris were thereby emptied, his rivals did everything in their power to put a stop to his teaching, declaring that as a monk he ought not to teach profane science, nor as a layman in theology sacred science. In order to legitimize his claim to teach the latter, he now wrote a theological treatise, regarding which he says:

"It so happened that I first endeavored to illuminate the basis of our faith

by similitudes drawn from human reason, and to compose for our students a treatise on 'The Divine Unity and Trinity,' because they kept asking for human and philosophic reasons, and demanding rather what could be understood than what could be said, declaring that the mere utterance of words was useless unless followed by understanding; that nothing could be believed that was not first understood, and that it was ridiculous for anyone to preach what neither he nor those he taught could comprehend, God himself calling such people blind leaders of the blind."

Here we have Abélard's central position, exactly the opposite to that of his realist contemporary, Anselm of Canterbury, whose principle was *Credo ut intelligam* [I believe, that I may understand]. We must not suppose, however, that Abélard, with his rationalism, dreamed of undermining Christian dogma. Very far from it! He believed it to be rational, and thought he could prove it so. No wonder that the book gave offense, in an age when faith and ecstasy were placed above reason. Indeed, his rivals could have wished for nothing better than this book, which gave them a weapon to use against him. Led on by two old enemies, Alberich and Lotulf, they caused an ecclesiastical council to be called at Soissons, to pass judgment upon the book (1121). This judgment was a foregone conclusion, the trial being the merest farce, in which the pursuers were the judges, the Papal legate allowing his better reason to be overruled by their passion. Abélard was condemned to burn his book in public, and to read the Athanasian Creed as his confession of faith (which he did in tears), and then to be confined permanently in the monastery of St. Médard as a dangerous heretic.

His enemies seemed to have triumphed and to have silenced him forever. Soon after, however, the Papal legate, ashamed of the part he had taken in the transaction, restored him to liberty and allowed him to return to his own monastery at St. Denis. Here once more his rationalistic, critical spirit brought him into trouble with the bigoted, licentious monks. Having maintained, on the authority of Beda, that Dionysius, the patron saint of the monastery, was bishop of Corinth and not of Athens, he raised such a storm that he was forced to flee, and took refuge on a neighboring estate, whose proprietor, Count Thibauld, was friendly to him. Here he was cordially received by the monks of Troyes, and allowed to occupy a retreat belonging to them.

After some time, and with great difficulty, he obtained leave from the abbot of St. Denis to live where he chose, on condition of not joining any other order. Being now practically a free man, he retired to a lonely spot near Nogent-sur-Seine, on the banks of the Ardusson. There, having received a gift of a piece of land, he established himself along with a friendly cleric, building a small oratory of clay and reeds to the Holy Trinity. No sooner, however, was his place of retreat known than he was followed into the wilderness by hosts of students of all ranks, who lived in tents, slept on the ground, and underwent every kind of hardship, in order to listen to him (1123). These

supplied his wants, and built a chapel, which he dedicated to the "Paraclete" — a name at which his enemies, furious over his success, were greatly scandalized, but which ever after designated the whole establishment.

So incessant and unrelenting were the persecutions he suffered from those enemies, and so deep his indignation at their baseness, that for some time he seriously thought of escaping beyond the bounds of Christendom, and seeking refuge among the Muslim. But just then (1125) he was offered an important position, the abbotship of the monastery of St. Gildas-de-Rhuys, in Lower Brittany, on the lonely, inhospitable shore of the Atlantic. Eager for rest and a position promising influence, Abélard accepted the offer and left the Paraclete, not knowing what he was doing.

His position at St. Gildas was little less than slow martyrdom. The country was wild, the inhabitants were half barbarous, speaking a language unintelligible to him; the monks were violent, unruly, and dissolute, openly living with concubines; the lands of the monastery were subjected to intolerable burdens by the neighboring lord, leaving the monks in poverty and discontent. Instead of finding a home of God-fearing men, eager for enlightenment, he found a nest of greed and corruption. His attempts to introduce discipline, or even decency, among his "sons," only stirred up rebellion and placed his life in danger. Many times he was menaced with the sword, many times with poison. In spite of all that, he clung to his office, and labored to do his duty. Meanwhile the jealous abbot of St. Denis succeeded in establishing a claim to the lands of the convent at Argenteuil — of which Héloïse, long since famous not only for learning but also for saintliness, was now the head — and she and her nuns were violently evicted and cast on the world. Hearing of this with indignation, Abélard at once offered the homeless sisters the deserted Paraclete and all its belongings. The offer was thankfully accepted, and Héloïse with her family removed there to spend the remainder of her life. It does not appear that Abélard and Héloïse ever saw each other at this time, although he used every means in his power to provide for her safety and comfort. This was in 1129. Two years later the Paraclete was confirmed to Héloïse by a Papal bull. It remained a convent, and a famous one, for over six hundred years.

After this Abélard paid several visits to the convent, which he justly regarded as his foundation, in order to arrange a rule of life for its inmates, and to encourage them in their vocation. Although on these occasions he saw nothing of Héloïse, he did not escape the malignant suspicions of the world, nor of his own flock, which now became more unruly than ever — so much so that he was compelled to live outside the monastery. Excommunication was tried in vain, and even the efforts of a Papal legate failed to restore order. For Abélard there was nothing but "fear within and conflict without." It was at this time, about 1132, that he wrote his famous '*Historia Calamitatum*,' from which most of the above account of his life has been taken. In 1134, after

nine years of painful struggle, he definitely left St. Gildas, without, however, resigning the abbotship. For the next two years he seems to have led a retired life, revising his old works and composing new ones.

Meanwhile, by some chance, his 'History of Calamities' fell into the hands of Héloïse at the Paraclete, was devoured with breathless interest, and rekindled the flame that seemed to have smoldered in her bosom for thirteen long years. Overcome with compassion for her husband, for such he really was, she at once wrote to him a letter which reveals the first healthy human heart-beat that had found expression in Christendom for a thousand years. Thus began a correspondence which, for genuine tragic pathos and human interest, has no equal in the world's literature. In Abélard, the scholarly monk has completely replaced the man; in Héloïse, the saintly nun is but a veil assumed in loving obedience to him, to conceal the deep-hearted, faithful, devoted flesh-and-blood woman. And such a woman! It may well be doubted if, for all that constitutes genuine womanhood, she ever had an equal. If there is salvation in love, Héloïse is in the heaven of heavens. She does not try to express her love in poems, as Mrs. Browning did; but her simple, straightforward expression of a love that would share Francesca's fate with her lover, rather than go to heaven without him, yields, and has yielded, matter for a hundred poems. She looks forward to no salvation; for her chief love is for him. *Domino specialiter, sua singulariter*: "As a member of the species woman I am the Lord's, as Héloïse I am yours" — Nominalism with a vengeance!

But to return to Abélard. Permanent quiet in obscurity was plainly impossible for him; and so in 1136 we find him back at Ste. Génévieve, lecturing to crowds of enthusiastic students. He probably thought that during the long years of his exile, the envy and hatred of his enemies had died out; but he soon discovered that he was greatly mistaken. He was too marked a character, and the tendency of his thought too dangerous, for that. Besides, he emptied the schools of his rivals, and adopted no conciliatory tone toward them. The natural result followed. In the year 1140, his enemies, headed by St. Bernard, who had long regarded him with suspicion, raised a cry of heresy against him, as subjecting everything to reason. Bernard, who was nothing if not a fanatic, and who managed to give vent to all his passions by placing them in the service of his God, at once denounced him to the Pope, to cardinals, and to bishops, in passionate letters, full of rhetoric, demanding his condemnation as a perverter of the bases of the faith.

At that time a great ecclesiastical council was about to assemble at Sens; and Abélard, feeling certain that his writings contained nothing which he could not show to be strictly orthodox, demanded that he should be allowed to explain and dialectically defend his position in open dispute before it. But this was above all things what his enemies dreaded. They felt that nothing was safe before his brilliant dialectic. Bernard even refused to enter the lists with him; and preferred to draw up a list of his heresies, in the form of

sentences sundered from their context in his works, some of them, indeed, from works which he never wrote, and to call upon the council to condemn them. Abélard, clearly understanding the scheme, feeling its unfairness, and knowing the effect of Bernard's lachrymose pulpit rhetoric upon sympathetic ecclesiastics who believed in his power to work miracles, appeared before the council, only to appeal from its authority to Rome. The council, though somewhat disconcerted by this, proceeded to condemn the disputed theses, and sent a notice of its action to the Pope. Fearing that Abélard, who had friends in Rome, might proceed thither and obtain a reversal of the verdict, Bernard set every agency at work to obtain a confirmation of it before his victim could reach the Eternal City. And he succeeded.

The result was for a time kept secret from Abélard, who, now over sixty years old, set out on his painful journey. Stopping on his way at the famous, hospitable Abbey of Cluny, he was most kindly entertained by its noble abbot, who well deserved the name of Peter the Venerable. Here, apparently, he learned that he had been condemned and excommunicated; for he went no further. Peter offered the weary man an asylum in his house, which was gladly accepted; and Abélard, at last convinced of the vanity of all worldly ambition, settled down to a life of humiliation, meditation, study, and prayer. Soon afterward Bernard made advances toward reconciliation, which Abélard accepted; whereupon his excommunication was removed. Then the once proud Abélard, shattered in body and broken in spirit, had nothing more to do but to prepare for another life. And the end was not far off. He died at St. Marcel, on the 21st of April, 1142, at the age of sixty-three. His generous host, in a letter to Héloïse, gives a touching account of his closing days, which were mostly spent in a retreat provided for him on the banks of the Saône. There he read, wrote, dictated, and prayed, in the only quiet days which his life ever knew.

The body of Abélard was placed in a monolith coffin and buried in the chapel of the monastery of St. Marcel; but Peter the Venerable twenty-two years afterward allowed it to be secretly removed, and carried to the Paraclete, where Abélard had wished to lie. When Héloïse, world-famous for learning, virtue, and saintliness, passed away, and her body was laid beside his, he opened his arms and clasped her in close embrace. So says the legend, and who would not believe it? The united remains of the immortal lovers, after many vicissitudes, found at last (let us hope), in 1817, a permanent resting place, in the Parisian cemetery of Père Lachaise, having been placed together in Abélard's monolith coffin. "In death they were not divided."

Abélard's character may be summed up in a few words. He was one of the most brilliant and variously gifted men that ever lived, a sincere lover of truth and champion of freedom. But unfortunately, his extraordinary personal beauty and charm of manner made him the object of so much attention and adulation that he soon became unable to live without seeing himself mirrored in the admiration and love of others. Hence his restlessness, irritability, craving

for publicity, fondness for dialectic triumph, and inability to live in fruitful obscurity; hence, too, his intrigue with Héloïse, his continual struggles and disappointments, his final humiliation and tragic end. Not having conquered the world, he cannot claim the crown of the martyr.

Abélard's works were collected by Cousin, and published in three quarto volumes (Paris, 1836, 1849, 1859). They include, besides the correspondence with Héloïse, and a number of sermons, hymns, answers to questions, etc., written for her, the following: — (1) 'Sic et Non,' a collection of (often contradictory) statements of the Fathers concerning the chief dogmas of religion, (2) 'Dialectic,' (3) 'On Genera and Species,' (4) Glosses to Porphyry's 'Introduction,' Aristotle's 'Categories and Interpretation,' and Boëthius' 'Topics,' (5) 'Introduction to Theology,' (6) 'Christian Theology,' (7) 'Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans,' (8) 'Abstract of Christian Theology,' (9) 'Ethics, or Know Thyself,' (10) 'Dialogue between a Philosopher, a Jew, and a Christian,' (11) 'On the Intellects,' (12) 'On the Hexameron,' with a few short and unimportant fragments and tracts. None of Abélard's numerous poems in the vernacular, in which he celebrated his love for Héloïse, which he sang ravishingly (for he was a famous singer), and which at once became widely popular, seem to have come down to us; but we have a somewhat lengthy poem, of considerable merit (though of doubtful authenticity), addressed to his son Astralabius, who grew to manhood, became a cleric, and died, it seems, as abbot of Hauterive in Switzerland, in 1162.

Of Abélard's philosophy, little need be added to what has been already said. It is, on the whole, the philosophy of the Middle Ages, with this difference: that he insists upon making theology rational, and thus may truly be called the founder of modern rationalism, and the initiator of the struggle against the tyrannic authority of blind faith. To have been so is his crowning merit, and is one that can hardly be overestimated. At the same time it must be borne in mind that he was a loyal son of the Church, and never dreamed of opposing or undermining her. His greatest originality is in 'Ethics,' in which, by placing the essence of morality in the intent and not in the action, he anticipated Kant and much modern speculation. Here he did admirable work. Abélard founded no school, strictly speaking; nevertheless, he determined the method and aim of Scholasticism, and exercised a boundless influence, which is not dead. Descartes and Kant are his children. Among his immediate disciples were a pope, twenty-nine cardinals, and more than fifty bishops. His two greatest pupils were Peter the Lombard, bishop of Paris, and author of the 'Sentences,' the theological text-book of the schools for hundreds of years; and Arnold of Brescia, one of the noblest champions of human liberty, though condemned and banished by the second Council of the Lateran.

THOMAS DAVIDSON

## HÉLOÏSE TO ABÉLARD

A LETTER of yours sent to a friend, best beloved, to console him in affliction, was lately, almost by a chance, put into my hands. Seeing the superscription, guess how eagerly I seized it! I had lost the reality; I hoped to draw some comfort from this faint image of you. But alas! — for I well remember — every line was written with gall and wormwood.

How you retold our sorrowful history, and dwelt on your incessant afflictions! Well did you fulfil that promise to your friend, that, in comparison with your own, his misfortunes should seem but as trifles. You recalled the persecutions of your masters, the cruelty of my uncle, and the fierce hostility of your fellow-pupils, Albericus of Rheims, and Lotulphus of Lombardy — how through their plottings that glorious book your Theology was burned, and you confined and disgraced — you went on to the machinations of the Abbot of St. Denys and of your false brethren of the convent, and the calumnies of those wretches, Norbert and Bernard, who envy and hate you. It was even, you say, imputed to you as an offense to have given the name of Paraclete, contrary to the common practice, to the Oratory you had founded.

The persecutions of that cruel tyrant of St. Gildas, and of those execrable monks — monks out of greed only, whom notwithstanding you call your children — which still harass you, close the miserable history. Nobody could read or hear these things and not be moved to tears. What then must they mean to me?

We all despair of your life, and our trembling hearts dread to hear the tidings of your murder. For Christ's sake, who has thus far protected you — write to us, as to His handmaids and yours, every circumstance of your present dangers. I and my sisters alone remain of all who were your friends. Let us be sharers of your joys and sorrows. Sympathy brings some relief, and a load laid on many shoulders is lighter. And write the more surely, if your letters may be messengers of joy. Whatever message they bring, at least they will show that you remember us. You can write to comfort your friend: while you soothe his wounds, you inflame mine. Heal, I pray you, those you yourself have made, you who bustle about to cure those for which you are not responsible. You cultivate a vineyard you did not plant, which grows nothing. Give heed to what you owe your own. You who spend so much on the obstinate, consider what you owe the obedient. You who lavish pains on your enemies, reflect on what you owe your daughters. And, counting nothing else, think how you are bound to me! What you owe to all devoted women, pay to her who is most devoted.

You know better than I how many treatises the holy fathers of the Church have written for our instruction; how they have labored to inform, to advise, and to console us. Is my ignorance to suggest knowledge to the learned Abélard? Long ago, indeed, your neglect astonished me. Neither religion, nor love of me, nor the example of the holy fathers, moved you to try to fix my struggling soul. Never, even when long grief had worn me down, did you come to see me, or send me one line of comfort — me, to whom you were bound by marriage, and who clasp you about with a measureless love! And for the sake of this love have I no right to even a thought of yours?

You well know, dearest, how much I lost in losing you, and that the manner of it put me to double torture. You only can comfort me. By you I was wounded, and by you I must be healed. And it is only you on whom the debt rests. I have obeyed the last tittle of your commands; and if you bade me, I would sacrifice my soul.

To please you my love gave up the only thing in the universe it valued — the hope of your presence — and that forever. The instant I received your commands I quitted the habit of the world, and denied all the wishes of my nature. I meant to give up, for your sake, whatever I had once a right to call my own.

God knows it was always you, and you only that I thought of. I looked for no dowry, no alliance of marriage. And if the name of wife is holier and more exalted, the name of friend always remained sweeter to me, or if you would not be angry, a meaner title; since the more I gave up, the less should I injure your present renown, and the more deserve your love.

Nor had you yourself forgotten this in that letter which I recall. You are ready enough to set forth some of the reasons which I used to you, to persuade you not to fetter your freedom, but you pass over most of the pleas I made to withhold you from our ill-fated wedlock. I call God to witness that if Augustus, ruler of the world, should think me worthy the honor of marriage, and settle the whole globe on me to rule forever, it would seem dearer and prouder to me to be called your mistress than his empress.

Not because a man is rich or powerful is he better: riches and power may come from luck, constancy is from virtue. I hold that woman base who weds a rich man rather than a poor one, and takes a husband for her own gain. Whoever marries with such a motive — why, she will follow his prosperity rather than the man, and be willing to sell herself to a richer suitor.

That happiness which others imagine, best beloved, I experienced. Other women might think their husbands perfect, and be happy in the idea, but I knew that you were so and the universe knew the same. What philosopher, what king, could rival your fame? What village, city, kingdom, was not on fire to see you? When you appeared in public, who did not run to behold you? Wives and maidens alike recognized your beauty and grace. Queens envied Héloïse her Abélard.

Two gifts you had to lead captive the proudest soul, your voice that made all your teaching a delight, and your singing, which was like no other. Do you forget those tender songs you wrote for me, which all the world caught up and sang — but not like you — those songs that kept your name ever floating in the air, and made me known through many lands, the envy and the scorn of women?

What gifts of mind, what gifts of person glorified you! Oh, my loss! Who would change places with me now!

And *you* know, Abélard, that though I am the great cause of your misfortunes, I am most innocent. For a consequence is no part of a crime. Justice weighs not the thing done, but the intention. And how pure was my intention toward you, you alone can judge. Judge me! I will submit.

But how happens it, tell me, that since my profession of the life which you alone determined, I have been so neglected and so forgotten that you will neither see me nor write to me? Make me understand it, if you can, or I must tell you what everybody says: that it was not a pure love like mine that held your heart, and that your coarser feeling vanished with absence and ill-report. Would that to me alone this seemed so, best beloved, and not to all the world! Would that I could hear others excuse you, or devise excuses myself!

The things I ask ought to seem very small and easy to you. While I starve for you, do, now and then, by words, bring back your presence to me! How can you be generous in deeds if you are so avaricious in words? I have done everything for your sake. It was not religion that dragged me, a young girl, so fond of life, so ardent, to the harshness of the convent, but only your command. If I deserve nothing from you, how vain is my labor! God will not recompense me, for whose love I have done nothing.

When you resolved to take the vows, I followed — rather, I ran before. You had the image of Lot's wife before your eyes; you feared I might look back, and therefore you deeded *me* to God by the sacred vestments and irrevocable vows before you took them yourself. For this, I own, I grieved, bitterly ashamed that I could depend on you so little, when I would lead or follow you straight to perdition. For my soul is always with you and no longer mine own. And if it is not with you in these last wretched years, it is nowhere. Do receive it kindly. Oh, if only you had returned favor for favor, even a little for the much, words for things! Would, beloved, that your affection would not take my tenderness and obedience always for granted; that it might be more anxious! But just because I have poured out all I have and am, you give me nothing. Remember, oh, remember how much you owe!

There was a time when people doubted whether I had given you all my heart, asking nothing. But the end shows how I began. I have denied myself a life which promised at least peace and work in the world, only to obey your hard exactions. I have kept back nothing for myself, except the comfort

of pleasing you. How hard and cruel are you then, when I ask so little and that little is so easy for you to give!

In the name of God, to whom you are dedicate, send me some lines of consolation. Help me to learn obedience! When you wooed me because earthly love was beautiful, you sent me letter after letter. With your divine singing every street and house echoed my name! How much more ought you now to persuade to God her whom then you turned from Him! Heed what I ask; think what you owe. I have written a long letter, but the ending shall be short. Farewell, darling!

### ABÉLARD'S ANSWER TO HÉLOÏSE

*To Héloïse, his best beloved Sister in Christ,  
Abélard, her Brother in Him:*

IF, since we resigned the world I have not written to you, it was because of the high opinion I have ever entertained of your wisdom and prudence. How could I think that she stood in need of help on whom Heaven had showered its best gifts? You were able, I knew, by example as by word, to instruct the ignorant, to comfort the timid, to kindle the lukewarm.

When prioress of Argenteuil, you practised all these duties and if you give the same attention to your daughters that you then gave to your sisters, it is enough. All my exhortations would be needless. But if, in your humility, you think otherwise, and if my words can avail you anything, tell me on what subjects you would have me write, and as God shall direct me I will instruct you. I thank God that the constant dangers to which I am exposed rouse your sympathies. Thus I may hope, under the divine protection of your prayers, to see Satan bruised under my feet.

Therefore I hastened to send you the form of prayer you beseech of me — you, my sister, once dear to me in the world, but now far dearer in Christ. Offer to God a constant sacrifice of prayer. Urge him to pardon our great and manifold sins, and to avert the dangers which threaten me. We know how powerful before God and his saints are the prayers of the faithful, but chiefly of faithful women for their friends, and of wives for their husbands. The Apostle admonishes us to pray without ceasing. . . . But I will not insist on the supplications of your sisterhood, day and night devoted to the service of their Maker; to you only do I turn. I well know how powerful your intercession may be. I pray you, exert it in this my need. In your prayers, then, ever remember him who, in a special sense, is yours. Urge your entreaties, for it is just that you should be heard. An equitable judge cannot refuse it.

In former days, you remember, best beloved, how fervently you recommended me to the care of Providence. Often in the day you uttered a special

petition. Removed now from the Paraclete, and surrounded by perils, how much greater my need! Convince me of the sincerity of your regard, I entreat, I implore you.

[The Prayer:] "O God, who by Thy servant didst here assemble Thy handmaids in Thy Holy Name, grant, we beseech Thee, that he be protected from all adversity, and be restored safe to us, Thy handmaids."


If Heaven permit my enemies to destroy me, or if I perish by accident, see that my body is conveyed to the Paraclete. There, my daughters, or rather my sisters in Christ, seeing my tomb, will not cease to implore Heaven for me. No resting-place is so safe for the grieving soul, forsaken in the wilderness of its sins, none so full of hope as that which is dedicated to the Paraclete — that is, the Comforter.

Where could a Christian find a more peaceful grave than in the society of holy women, consecrated by God? They, as the Gospel tells us, would not leave their divine Master; they embalmed His body with precious spices; they followed Him to the tomb, and there they held their vigil. In return, it was to them that the angel of the Resurrection appeared for their consolation.

Finally, let me entreat you that the solicitude you now too strongly feel for my life you will extend to the repose of my soul. Carry into my grave the love you showed me when alive; that is, never forget to pray Heaven for me.

Long life, farewell! Long life, farewell, to your sisters also! Remember me, but let it be in Christ!

## THE VESPER HYMN OF ABÉLARD

 H, what shall be, oh, when shall be that holy Sabbath day,  
Which heavenly care shall ever keep and celebrate always,  
When rest is found for weary limbs, when labor hath reward,  
When everything forevermore is joyful in the Lord?

The true Jerusalem above, the holy town, is there,  
Whose duties are so full of joy, whose joy so free from care;  
Where disappointment cometh not to check the longing heart,  
And where the heart, in ecstasy, hath gained her better part.

O glorious King, O happy state, O palace of the blest!  
O sacred place and holy joy, and perfect, heavenly rest!  
To thee aspire thy citizens in glory's bright array,  
And what they feel and what they know they strive in vain to say.

For while we wait and long for home, it shall be ours to raise  
Our songs and chants and vows and prayers in that dear country's praise;

And from these Babylonian streams to lift our weary eyes,  
And view the city that we love descending from the skies.

There, there, secure from every ill, in freedom we shall sing  
The songs of Zion, hindered here by days of suffering,  
And unto Thee, our gracious Lord, our praises shall confess  
That all our sorrow hath been good, and Thou by pain canst bless.

There Sabbath day to Sabbath day sheds on a ceaseless light,  
Eternal pleasure of the saints who keep that Sabbath bright;  
Nor shall the chant ineffable decline, nor ever cease,  
Which we with all the angels sing in that sweet realm of peace.

Translated by Dr. Samuel W. Duffield

## GESTA ROMANORUM

**W**HAT are the 'Gesta Romanorum'? The most curious and interesting of all collections of popular tales. Negatively, one thing they are not: that is, they are not "Deeds of the Romans," the acts of the heirs of the Cæsars. All such allusions are the purest fantasy. The great "citee of Rome," and some oddly dubbed emperor thereof, indeed the entire background, are in truth as unhistorical and imaginary as the tale itself.

Such stories are very old. So far back did they spring that it would be idle to conjecture their origin. In the centuries long before Caxton, the centuries before manuscript-writing filled up the leisure hours of the monks, the 'Gesta,' both in the Orient and in the Occident, were brought forth. Plain, direct, and unvarnished, they are the form in which the men of ideas of those rude times approached and entertained, by accounts of human joy and woe, their brother men of action. Every race of historic importance, from the eastern Turanians to the western Celts, has produced such legends. Sometimes they delight the lover of folk-lore; sometimes they belong to the dry-as-dust antiquarian. But our 'Gesta,' with their directness and naïveté, with their occasional beauty of diction and fine touches of sympathy and imagination — even with their Northern lack of grace — are properly a part of literature. In these 'Deeds' is found the plot or ground-plan of such master works as 'King Lear' and 'The Merchant of Venice,' and the first cast of material refined by Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, Schiller, and other writers.

Among the people in medieval times such tales evidently passed from mouth to mouth. They were the common food of fancy and delight to our forefathers, as they gathered round the fire in stormy weather. Their recital en-

livened the women's unnumbered hours of spinning, weaving, and embroidery. As the short days of the year came on, there must have been calls for 'The Knights of Baldak and Lombardy,' 'The Three Caskets,' or 'The White and Black Daughters,' as nowadays we go to our book-shelves for the stories that the race still loves, and ungraciously enjoy the silent telling.

Folk-stories such as those which comprise the '*Gesta Romanorum*' must have passed from district to district and even from nation to nation, by many channels — chief among them the constant wanderings of monks and minstrels — becoming the common heritage of many peoples, and passing from secular to sacerdotal use. The medieval Church, with the acuteness that characterized it, seized on the pretty tales, and adding to them the moralizing which a crude system of ethics enjoined, carried its spoils to the pulpit. Even the fables of pagan Æsop were thus employed.

In the twelfth century the ecclesiastical forces were appropriating to their use whatever secular rights and possessions came within their grasp. A common ardor permitted and sustained this aggrandizement, and the devotion that founded and swelled the mendicant orders of Francis and Dominic, and led the populace to carry with prayers and psalm-singing the stones of which great cathedrals were built, readily gave their hearth-tales to illustrate texts and inculcate doctrines. A habit of interpreting moral and religious precepts by allegory led to the far-fetched, sometimes droll, and always naïve "moralities" which commonly follow each one of the '*Gesta*.' The more popular the tale, the more easily it held the attention; and the priests with telling directness brought home the moral to the simple-minded. The innocent joys and sad offenses of humanity interpreted the Church's whole system of theology, and the stories, committed to writing by the priests, were thus preserved.

The secular tales must have been used in the pulpit for some time before their systematic collection was undertaken. The zeal for compiling probably reached its height in the age of Pierre Bercheure, who died in 1362. To Bercheure, prior of the Benedictine Convent of St. Eloi at Paris, the collection of '*Gesta Romanorum*' has been ascribed. Österley, who published in 1872 the result of an investigation of one hundred and sixty-five manuscripts, asserts that the '*Gesta*' were originally compiled towards the end of the thirteenth century in England, from which country they were taken to the Continent, there undergoing various alterations. "The popularity of the original '*Gesta*,'" says Sir F. Madden, "not only on the Continent but among the English clergy, appears to have induced some person, apparently in the reign of Richard the Second, to undertake a similar compilation in this country." The '*Anglo-Latin Gesta*' is the immediate original of the early English translation from which the following stories are taken, with slight verbal changes.

The word *Gesta*, in medieval Latin, means notable or historic act or exploit. The Church, drawing all power, consequence, and grace from Rome, naturally

looked back to the Roman empire for historic examples. In this fact we find the reason of the name. The tales betray an entire ignorance of history. In one, for example, a statue is raised to Julius Cæsar twenty-two years after the founding of Rome; while in another, Socrates, Alexander, and the Emperor Claudius are living together in Rome.

### THEODOSIUS THE EMPEROURE <sup>1</sup>

**T**HEODOSIUS reigned a wise emperour in the cite of Rome, and mighty he was of power; the which emperoure had three doughters. So it liked to this emperour to knowe which of his doughters loved him best; and then he said to the eldest doughter, "How much lovest thou me?" "Forsoth," quoth she, "more than I do myself." "Therefore," quoth he, "thou shalt be heighly advanced"; and married her to a riche and mighty kyng. Then he came to the second, and said to her, "Doughter, how much lovest thou me?" "As muche forsoth," she said, "as I do myself." So the emperoure married her to a duke. And then he said to the third doughter, "How much lovest thou me?" "Forsoth," quoth she, "as muche as ye be worthy, and no more." Then said the emperoure, "Doughter, since thou lovest me no more, thou shalt not be married so richely as thy sisters be." And then he married her to an earl.

After this it happened that the emperour held battle against the Kyng of Egypt, and the kyng drove the emperour oute of the empire, in so muche that the emperour had no place to abide inne. So he wrote lettres ensealed with his ryng to his first doughter that said that she loved him more than her self, for to pray her of succoring in that great need, bycause he was put out of his empire. And when the doughter had red these lettres she told it to the kyng her husband. Then quoth the kyng, "It is good that we succor him in his need. I shall," quoth he, "gather an host and help him in all that I can or may; and that will not be done withoute great costage." "Yea," quoth she, "it were sufficient if that we would graunt him V knyghtes to be fellowship with him while he is oute of his empire." And so it was done indeed; and the doughter wrote again to the fader that other help might he not have, but V knyghtes of the kynges to be in his fellowship, at the coste of the kyng her husband.

And when the emperour heard this he was hevy in his hert and said, "Alas! alas! all my trust was in her; for she said she loved me more than herself, and therefore I advanced her so high."

Then he wrote to the second, that said she loved him as much as her self. And when she had herd his lettres she shewed his erand to her husband, and

<sup>1</sup> The story of King Lear and his three daughters.

gave him in counsel that he should find him mete and drink and clothing, honestly as for the state of such a lord, during tyme of his nede; and when this was graunted she wrote lettres agein to hir fadir.

The Emperour was hevy with this answer, and said, "Since my two daughters have thus grieved me, in sooth I shall prove the third."

And so he wrote to the third that she loved him as much as he was worthy; and prayed her of succor in his nede, and told her the answer of her two sisters. So the third daughter, when she considered the mischief of her fader, she told her husbond in this fourme: "My worshipful lord, do succor me now in this great nede; my fadir is put out of his empire and his heritage." Then spake he, "What were thy will I did thereto?" "That ye gather a great host," quoth she, "and help him to fight against his enemys." "I shall fulfil thy will," said the earl; and gathered a greates hoste and wente with the emperour at his owne costage to the battle, and had the victorie, and set the emperour again in his heritage.

And then said the emperour, "Blessed be the hour I gat my yongest daughter! I loved her lesse than any of the others, and now in my nede she hath succored me, and the others have failed me, and therefore after my deth she shall have mine empire." And so it was done in dede; for after the deth of the emperour the youngest daughter reigned in his sted, and ended peacefully.

#### MORALITE

Dere Frendis, this emperour may be called each worldly man, the which hath three daughters. The first daughter, that saith, "I love my fadir more than my self," is the worlde, whom a man loveth so well that he expendeth all his life about it; but what tyme he shall be in nede of deth, scarcely if the world will for all his love give him five knyghtes, *scil.* v. boards for a coffin to lay his body inne in the sepulcre. The second daughter, that loveth her fader as much as her selfe, is thy wife or thy children or thy kin, the whiche will haply find thee in thy nede to the tyme that thou be put in the erthe. And the third daughter, that loveth thee as much as thou art worthy, is our Lord God, whom we love too little. But if we come to him in tyme of oure nede with a clene hert and mynd, without doute we shall have help of him against the Kyng of Egipt, *scil.* the Devil; and he shall set us in our owne heritage, *scil.* the kyngdome of heven. *Ad quod nos* [etc.].

ANCELMUS THE EMPEROUR <sup>1</sup>

**A**NCELMUS reigned emperour in the cite of Rome, and he wedded to wife the Kinges doughter of Jerusalem, the which was a faire woman and long dwelte in his company. . . . Happening in a certaine evening as he walked after his supper in a fair green, and thought of all the worlde, and especially that he had no heir, and how that the Kinge of Naples strongly therefore noyed [harmed] him each year; and so whenne it was night he went to bed and took a sleep and dreamed this: He saw the firmament in its most clearnesse, and more clear than it was wont to be, and the moon was more pale; and on a parte of the moon was a faire-colored bird, and beside her stood two beasts, the which nourished the bird with their heat and breath. After this came divers beasts and birds flying, and they sang so sweetly that the emperour was with the song awaked.

Thenne on the morrow the emperoure had great marvel of his sweven [dream], and called to him divinours [soothsayers] and lords of all the empire, and saide to them, "Deere frendes, telleth me what is the interpretation of my sweven, and I shall reward you; and but if ye do, ye shall be dead." And then they saide, "Lord, show to us this dream, and we shall tell thee the interpretation of it." And then the emperour told them as is saide before, from beginning to ending. And then they were glad, and with a great gladnesse spake to him and saide, "Sir, this was a good sweven. For the firmament that thou sawe so clear is the empire, the which henceforth shall be in prosperity; the pale moon is the emperesse. . . . The little bird is the faire son whom the emperesse shall bryng forth, when time cometh; the two beasts been riche men and wise men that shall be obedient to thy child; the other beasts been other folke, that never made homage and nowe shall be subject to thy sone; the birds that sang so sweetly is the empire of Rome, that shall joy of thy child's birth: and sir, this is the interpretation of your dream."

When the emperesse heard this she was glad enough; and soon she bare a faire sone, and thereof was made much joy. And when the King of Naples heard that, he thought to himselfe: "I have longe time holden war against the emperour, and it may not be but that it will be told to his son, when that he cometh to his full age, howe that I have fought all my life against his fader. Yea," thought he, "he is now a child, and it is good that I procure for peace, that I may have rest of him when he is in his best and I in my worste."

So he wrote lettres to the emperour for peace to be had; and the emperour seeing that he did that more for cause of dread than of love, he sent him

<sup>1</sup> The story of the three caskets in 'The Merchant of Venice.'

worde again, and saide that he would make him surety of peace, with condition that he would be in his servitude and yield him homage all his life, each year. Thenne the kyng called his counsel and asked of them what was best to do; and the lordes of his kyngdom saide that it was goode to follow the emperour in his will: — "In the first ye aske of him surety of peace; so that we say thus: Thou hast a doughter and he hath a son; let matrimony be made between them, and so there shall be good sikernes [sureness]; also it is good to make him homage and yield him rents." Thenne the kyng sent word to the emperour and saide that he would fulfil his will in all points, and give his doughter to his son in wife, if that it were pleasing to him.

This answer liked well the emperour. So letters were made of this covenant; and he made a shippe to be adeyned [prepared], to lead his doughter with a certain of knightes and ladies to the emperour to be married with his sone. And whenne they were in the shippe and hadde far passed from the lande, there rose up a great horrible tempest, and drowned all that were in the ship, except the maid. Thenne the maide set all her hope strongly in God; and at the last the tempest ceased; but then followed strongly a great whale to devoure this maid. And whenne she saw that, she muche dreaded; and when the night come, the maid, dreading that the whale would have swallowed the ship, smote fire at a stone, and had great plenty of fire; and as long as the fire lasted the whale durst come not near, but about cock's crow the mayde, for great vexacion that she had with the tempest, fell asleep, and in her sleep the fire went out; and when it was out the whale came nigh and swallowed both the ship and the mayde. And when the mayde felt that she was in the womb of a whale, she smote and made great fire, and grievously wounded the whale with a little knife, in so much that the whale drew to the land and died; for that is the kind to draw to the land when he shall die.

And in this time there was an earl named Pirius, and he walked in his disport by the sea, and afore him he sawe the whale come toward the land. He gathered great help and strength of men; and with diverse instruments they smote the whale in every part of him. And when the damsell heard the great strokes she cried with an high voice and saide, "Gentle sirs, have pity on me, for I am the doughter of a king, and a mayde have been since I was born." Whenne the earl heard this he marveled greatly, and opened the whale and took oute the damsell. Thenne the maide tolde by order how that she was a kyng's doughter, and how she lost her goods in the sea, and how she could be married to the son of the emperour. And when the earl heard these words he was glad, and helde the maide with him a great while, till tyme that she was well comforted; and then he sent her solemnly to the emperour. And whenne he saw her coming, and heard that she had tribulacions in the sea, he had great compassion for her in his heart, and saide to her, "Goode damsell, thou hast suffered muche anger for the love of my son; nevertheless, if that thou be worthy to have him I shall soon prove."

The emperour had made III. vessells, and the first was of clean [pure] golde and full of precious stones outwarde, and within full of dead bones; and it had a superscription in these words: *They that choose me shall find in me that they deserve.* The second vessell was all of clean silver, and full of worms: and outwarde it had this superscription: *They that choose me shall find in me that nature and kind desireth.* And the third vessell was of lead and within was full of precious stones, and without was set this scripture [inscription]: *They that choose me shall find in me that God hath disposed.* These III. vessells tooke the emperour and showed the maide, saying, "Lo! deer damsell, here are three worthy vessellys, and if thou choose [the] one of these wherein is profit and right to be chosen, then thou shalt have my son to husband; and if thou choose that that is not profitable to thee nor to no other, forsooth, thenne thou shalt not have him."

Whenne the doughter heard this and saw the three vessells, she lifted up her eyes to God and saide: — "Thou, Lord, that knowest all things, graunt me thy grace now in the need of this time, *scil.* that I may choose at this time, wherethrough [through which] I may joy the son of the emperour and have him to husband." Thenne she beheld the first vessell that was so subtly [cunningly] made, and read the superscription; and thenne she thought, "What have I deserved for to have so precious a vessell? and though it be never so gay without, I know not how foul it is within"; so she tolde the emperour that she would by no way choose that. Thenne she looked to the second, that was of silver, and read the superscription; and thenne she said, "My nature and kind asketh but delectation of the flesh, forsooth, sir," quoth she; "and I refuse this." Thenne she looked to the third, that was of lead, and read the superscription, and then she saide, "In sooth, God disposed never evil; forsooth, that which God hath disposed will I take and choose."

And when the emperour sawe that he saide, "Goode damesell, open now that vessell and see what thou hast found." And when it was opened it was full of gold and precious stones. And thenne the emperour saide to her again, "Damesell, thou hast wisely chosen and won my son to thine husband." So the day was set of their bridal, and great joy was made; and the son reigned after the decease of the fadir, the which made faire ende. *Ad quod nos perducatur! Amen.*

#### MORALITE

Deere frendis, this emperour is the Father of Heaven, the whiche made man ere he tooke flesh. The empress that conceived was the blessed Virgin, that conceived by the annunciation of the angel. The firmament was set in his most clearnesse, *scil.* the world was lighted in all its parts by the conception of the empress Our Lady. . . . The little bird that passed from the

side of the moon is our Lord Jesus Christ, that was born at midnight and lapped [wrapped] in clothes and set in the crib. The two beasts are the oxen and the asses. The beasts that come from far parts are the herds [shepherds] to whom the angels saide, *Ecce annuncio vobis gaudium magnum* — "Lo! I shew you a great joy." The birds that sang so sweetly are angels of heaven, that sang *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. The king that held such war is mankind, that was contrary to God while that it was in power of the Devil; but when our Lord Jesus Christ was born, then mankind inclined to God, and sent for peace to be had, when he took baptism and saide that he gave him to God and forsook the Devil. Now the king gave his daughter to the son of the emperour, *scil.* each one of us ought to give to God our soul in matrimony; for he is ready to receive her to his spouse [etc.].

#### HOW AN ANCHORESS WAS TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL

THERE was a woman some time in the world living that sawe the wretchedness, the sins, and the unstableness that was in the worlde; therefore she left all the worlde, and wente into the deserte, and lived there many years with roots and grasse, and such fruit as she might gete; and dranke water of the welle-spryng, for othere livelihood had she none. Atte laste, when she had longe dwelled there in that place, the Devil in likenesse of a woman, come to this holy woman's place; and when he come there he knocked at the door. The holy woman come to the door and asked what she would? She saide, "I pray thee, dame, that thou wilt harbor me this night; for this day is at an end, and I am afeard that wild beasts should devour me." The good woman saide, "For God's love ye are welcome to me; and take such as God sendeth." They sat them down together, and the good woman sat and read saints' lives and other good things, till she come to this writing, "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be caste downe, and burnt in helle." "That is sooth," saide the Fiend, "and therefore I am adread; for if we lead oure life alone, therefore we shall have little meed, for when we dwelle alone we profit none but oure self. Therefore it were better, me thinketh, to go and dwelle among folke, for to give example to man and woman dwelling in this worlde. Then shall we have much meed." When this was saide they went to reste. This good woman thought faste in her heart that she might not sleep nor have no rest, for the thing that the Fiend had said. Anon this woman arose and saide to the other woman, "This night might I have no reste for the words that thou saide yester even. Therefore I wot never what is best to be done for us." Then the Devil said to her again, "It is best to go forth to profit to othere that shall be glad of oure coming, for that is much more worth than to live alone." Then saide the woman to the

Fiend, "Go we now forth on our way, for me thinketh it is not evil to essay." And when she should go out at the door, she stood still, and said thus, "Now, sweet Lady, Mother of mercy, and help at all need, now counsel me the best, and keep me both body and soul from deadly sin." When she had said these words with good heart and with good will, our Lady came and laid her hand on her breast, and put her in again, and bade her that she should abide there, and not be led by falsehood of our Enemy. The Fiend anon went away that she saw him no more there. Then she was full fain that she was kept and not beguiled of her enemy. Then she said on this wise to our Blessed Lady that is full of mercy and goodness, "I thank thee now with all my heart, specially for this keeping and many more that thou hast done to me oft since; and good Lady, keep me from henceforward." Lo! here may men and women see how ready this good Lady is to help her servants at all their need, when they call to her for help, that they fall not in sin bestirring of the wicked enemy the false Fiend.

## BESTIARIES AND LAPIDARIES

ONE of the marked features of literary investigation during the last hundred years or so is the interest manifested in the Middle Ages. Not only have specialists devoted themselves to the detailed study of the sagas of the North and the great cycles of Romance in France and England, but the stories of the Edda, of the Nibelungen, and of Charlemagne and King Arthur have become popularized, so that today they are familiar to the general reader. There is one class of literature, however, which was widespread and popular during the Middle Ages, but which is today known only to the student — that is, the so-called Bestiaries and Lapidaries, or collections of stories and superstitions concerning the marvelous attributes of animals and of precious stones.

The basis of all Bestiaries is the Greek Physiologus, the origin of which can be traced back to the second century before Christ. It was undoubtedly largely influenced by the zoölogy of the Bible; and in the references to the Ibex, the Phoenix, and the tree Paradixion, traces of Oriental and old Greek superstitions can be seen. It was from the Latin versions of the Greek original that translations were made into nearly all European languages. There are extant today, whole or in fragments, Bestiaries in German, Old English, Old French, Provençal, Icelandic, Italian, Bohemian, and even Armenian, Ethiopic, and Syriac. These various versions differ more or less in the arrangement and number of the animals described, but all point back to the same ultimate source.

The main object of the Bestiaries was not so much to impart scientific

knowledge, as by means of symbols and allegories to teach the doctrines and mysteries of the Church. At first this symbolical application was short and concise, but later became more and more expanded, until it often occupied more space than the description of the animal which served as a text.

Some of these animals are entirely fabulous, such as the Siren, the Phœnix, the Unicorn; others are well known, but possess certain fabulous attributes. The descriptions of them are not the result of personal observation, but are derived from stories told by travelers or read in books, or are merely due to the imagination of the author; these stories, passing down from hand to hand, gradually became accepted facts.

These books were enormously popular during the Middle Ages, a fact which is proved by the large number of manuscripts still extant. Their influence on literature was likewise very great. To say nothing of the encyclopedic works — such as 'Li Tresors' of Brunetto Latini, the 'Image du Monde,' the 'Roman de la Rose' — which contain extracts from the Bestiaries — there are many references to them in the great writers, even down to the present day. There are certain passages in Dante, Chaucer, and Shakespeare, that would be unintelligible without some knowledge of these medieval books of zoölogy.

Hence, besides the interest inherent in these quaint and childish stories, besides their value in revealing the scientific spirit and attainments of the times, some knowledge of the Bestiaries is of undoubted value and interest to the student of literature.

Closely allied to the Bestiaries (and indeed often contained in the same manuscript) are the Lapidaries, in which are discussed the various kinds of precious stones, with their physical characteristics — shape, size, color, their use in medicine, and their marvelous talismanic properties. In spite of the fact that they contain the most absurd fables and superstitions, they were actually used as textbooks in the schools, and published in medical treatises. The most famous of them was written in Latin by Marbode, Bishop of Rennes (died in 1123), and translated many times into Old French and other languages.

The following extracts from the Bestiaries are translated from 'Le Bestiaire' of Guillaume Le Clerc, composed in the year 1210. While endeavoring to retain somewhat of the quaintness and naïveté of the original, I have omitted those repetitions and tautological expressions which are so characteristic of medieval literature. The religious application of the various animals is usually very long, and often is the mere repetition of the same idea. The specimen here given may be taken as a type of all the rest.

L. OSCAR KUHN

## THE LION

IT is proper that we should first speak of the nature of the lion, which is a fierce and proud beast and very bold. It has three especially peculiar characteristics. In the first place it always dwells upon a high mountain. From afar off it can scent the hunter who is pursuing it. And in order that the latter may not follow it to its lair it covers over its track by means of its tail. Another wonderful peculiarity of the lion is that when it sleeps its eyes are wide open, and clear and bright. The third characteristic is likewise very strange. For when the lioness brings forth her young, it falls to the ground, and gives no sign of life until the third day, when the lion breathes upon it and in this way brings it back to life again.

The meaning of all this is very clear. When God, our Sovereign father, who is the Spiritual lion, came for our salvation here upon earth, so skilfully did he cover his tracks that never did the hunter know that this was our Saviour, and nature marveled how he came among us. By the hunter you must understand him who made man to go astray and seeks after him to devour him. This is the Devil, who desires only evil.

When this lion was laid upon the Cross by the Jews, his enemies, who judged him wrongfully, his human nature suffered death. When he gave up the spirit from his body, he fell asleep upon the holy cross. Then his divine nature awoke. This must you believe if you wish to live again.

When God was placed in the tomb, he was there only three days, and on the third day the Father breathed upon him and brought him to life again, just as the lion did to its young.

## THE PELICAN

THE pelican is a wonderful bird which dwells in the region about the river Nile. The written history <sup>1</sup> tells us that there are two kinds — those which dwell in the river and eat nothing but fish, and those which dwell in the desert and eat only insects and worms. There is a wonderful thing about the pelican, for never did mother-sheep love her lamb as the pelican loves its young. When the young are born, the parent bird devotes all his care and thought to nourishing them. But the young birds are ungrateful, and when they have grown strong and self-reliant they peck at their father's face, and he, enraged at their wickedness, kills them all.

<sup>1</sup> The reference here is probably to the 'Liber de Bestiis et Aliis Rebus' of Hugo de St. Victor.

On the third day the father comes to them, deeply moved with pity and sorrow. With his beak he pierces his own side, until the blood flows forth. With the blood he brings back life into the body of his young.<sup>1</sup>

## THE EAGLE

**T**HE eagle is the king of birds. When it is old it becomes young again in a very strange manner. When its eyes are darkened and its wings are heavy with age, it seeks out a fountain clear and pure, where the water bubbles up and shines in the clear sunlight. Above this fountain it rises high up into the air, and fixes its eyes upon the light of the sun and gazes upon it until the heat thereof sets on fire its eyes and wings. Then it descends down into the fountain where the water is clearest and brightest, and plunges and bathes three times, until it is fresh and renewed and healed of its old age.<sup>2</sup>

The eagle has such keen vision, that if it is high up among the clouds, soaring through the air, it sees the fish swimming beneath it, in river or sea; then down it shoots upon the fish and seizes and drags it to the shore. Again, if unknown to the eagle its eggs should be changed and others put into its nest — when the young are grown, before they fly away, it carries them up into the air when the sun is shining its brightest. Those which can look at the rays of the sun, without blinking, it loves and holds dear; those which cannot stand to look at the light, it abandons, as base-born, nor troubles itself henceforth concerning them.<sup>3</sup>

## THE PHŒNIX

**T**HERE is a bird named the phœnix, which dwells in India and is never found elsewhere. This bird is always alone and without companion, for its like cannot be found, and there is no other bird which resembles it in habits or appearance.<sup>4</sup> At the end of five hundred years it feels that it has grown old, and loads itself with many rare and precious spices, and flies from the desert away to the city of Leopolis. There, by some sign or

<sup>1</sup> There are many allusions in literature to this story. Cf. Shakespeare: —

Like the kind life-rendering pelican,

Repast them with my blood. — 'Hamlet,' iv, 5.

"Those pelican daughters." — Lear, iii, 4. Cf. also the beautiful metaphor of Alfred de Musset, in his 'Nuit de Mai.'

<sup>2</sup> "Bated like eagles having lately bathed." — '1 Henry IV,' iv, 1.

<sup>3</sup> "Nay, if thou be that princely eagle's bird,

Show thy descent by gazing 'gainst the sun." — '3 Henry VI,' ii, 1.

<sup>4</sup> "Were man as rare as phœnix." — 'As You Like It,' iv, 3.

other, the coming of the bird is announced to a priest of that city, who causes fagots to be gathered and placed upon a beautiful altar, erected for the bird. And so, as I have said, the bird, laden with spices, comes to the altar, and smiting upon the hard stone with its beak, it causes the flame to leap forth and set fire to the wood and the spices. When the fire is burning brightly, the phœnix lays itself upon the altar and is burned to dust and ashes.

Then comes the priest and finds the ashes piled up, and separating them softly he finds within a little worm, which gives forth an odor sweeter than that of roses or of any other flower. The next day and the next the priest comes again, and on the third day he finds that the worm has become a full-grown and full-fledged bird, which bows low before him and flies away, glad and joyous, nor returns again before five hundred years.<sup>1</sup>

### THE ANT

THERE is another kind of ant up in Ethiopia, which is of the shape and size of dogs. They have strange habits, for they scratch into the ground and extract therefrom great quantities of fine gold. If anyone wishes to take this gold from them, he soon repents of his undertaking; for the ants run upon him, and if they catch him they devour him instantly. The people who live near them know that they are fierce and savage, and that they possess a great quantity of gold, and so they have invented a cunning trick. They take mares which have unweaned foals, and give them no food for three days. On the fourth the mares are saddled, and to the saddles are fastened boxes that shine like gold. Between these people and the ants flows a very swift river. The famished mares are driven across this river, while the foals are kept on the hither side. On the other side of the river the grass is rich and thick. Here the mares graze, and the ants seeing the shining boxes think they have found a good place to hide their gold, and so all day long they fill and load the boxes with their precious gold, till night comes on and the mares have eaten their fill. When they hear the neighing of their foals they hasten to return to the other side of the river. There their masters take the gold from the boxes and become rich and powerful, but the ants grieve over their loss.

<sup>1</sup> "But as when

The Bird of Wonder dies, the maiden phœnix,  
Her ashes new create another heir." — 'Henry VIII,' v, 5.

## THE SIREN

THE siren is a monster of strange fashion, for from the waist up it is the most beautiful thing in the world, formed in the shape of a woman. The rest of the body is like a fish or a bird. So sweetly and beautifully does she sing that they who go sailing over the sea, as soon as they hear the song, cannot keep from going towards her. Entranced by the music, they fall asleep in their boat, and are killed by the siren before they can utter a cry.<sup>1</sup>

## THE WHALE

IN the sea, which is mighty and vast, are many kinds of fish, such as the turbot, the sturgeon, and the porpoise. But there is one monster, very treacherous and dangerous. In Latin its name is Cetus. It is a bad neighbor for sailors. The upper part of its back looks like sand, and when it rises from the sea, the mariners think it is an island. Deceived by its size they sail toward it for refuge, when the storm comes upon them. They cast anchor, disembark upon the back of the whale, cook their food, build a fire, and in order to fasten their boat they drive great stakes into what seems to them to be sand. When the monster feels the heat of the fire which burns upon its back, it plunges down into the depths of the sea, and drags the ship and all the people after it.

When the fish is hungry it opens its mouth very wide, and breathes forth an exceedingly sweet odor. Then all the little fish stream thither, and, allured by the sweet smell, crowd into its throat. Then the whale closes its jaws and swallows them into its stomach, which is as wide as a valley.<sup>2</sup>

## THE CROCODILE

THE crocodile is a fierce beast that lives always beside the river Nile. In shape it is somewhat like an ox; it is full twenty ells long, and as big around as the trunk of a tree. It has four feet, large claws, and very sharp teeth; by means of these it is well armed. So hard and tough is its skin, that it minds not in the least hard blows made by sharp stones. Never

<sup>1</sup> References to the siren are innumerable; the most famous perhaps is Heine's 'Lorelei.' Cf. also Dante, 'Purgatorio,' xix, 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> "Who is a whale of virginity and devours up all the fry it finds." — 'All's Well that Ends Well,' iv, 3.

was seen another such a beast, for it lives on land and in water. At night it is submerged in water, and during the day it reposes upon the land. If it meets and overcomes a man, it swallows him entire, so that nothing remains. But ever after it laments him as long as it lives.<sup>1</sup> The upper jaw of this beast is immovable when it eats, and the lower one alone moves. No other living creature has this peculiarity. The other beast of which I have told you (the water-serpent), which always lives in the water, hates the crocodile with a mortal hatred. When it sees the crocodile sleeping on the ground with its mouth wide open, it rolls itself in the slime and mud in order to become more slippery. Then it leaps into the throat of the crocodile and is swallowed down into its stomach. Here it bites and tears its way out again, but the crocodile dies on account of its wounds.

### THE TURTLE-DOVE

**N**OW I must tell you of another bird which is courteous and beautiful, and which loves much and is much loved. This is the turtle-dove. The male and the female are always together in mountain or in desert, and if perchance the female loses her companion never more will she cease to mourn for him, never more will she sit upon green branch or leaf. Nothing in the world can induce her to take another mate, but she ever remains loyal to her husband. When I consider the faithfulness of this bird, I wonder at the fickleness of man and woman. Many husbands and wives there are who do not love as the turtle-dove; but if the man bury his wife, before he has eaten two meals he desires to have another woman in his arms. The turtle-dove does not so, but remains patient and faithful to her companion, waiting if haply he might return.<sup>2</sup>

### THE MANDRAGORA

**T**HE mandragora is a wild plant, the like of which does not exist. Many kinds of medicine can be made of its root; this root, if you look at it closely, will be seen to have the form of a man. The bark is very useful; when well boiled in water it helps many diseases. The skilful physicians gather this plant when it is old, and they say that when it is plucked it weeps

<sup>1</sup> "Crocodile tears" are proverbial. Cf:

"As the mournful crocodile

With sorrow snares relenting passengers." — '2 Henry VI,' iii, 1.

"Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile." — 'Othello,' iv, 1.

<sup>2</sup> "Like to a pair of loving turtle-doves,

That could not live asunder day or night." — '1 Henry VI,' ii, 2.

and cries, and if anyone hears the cry he will die.<sup>1</sup> But those who gather it do this so carefully that they receive no evil from it. If a man has a pain in his head or in his body, or in his hand or foot, it can be cured by this herb. If you take this plant and beat it and let the man drink of it, he will fall asleep very softly, and no more will he feel pain.<sup>2</sup> There are two kinds of this plant — male and female. The leaves of both are beautiful. The leaf of the female is thick like that of the wild lettuce.

The following two extracts are translated from 'Les Lapidaires Français du Moyen Âge,' by Leopold Pannier, Paris, 1882.

### SAPPHIRE

THE sapphire is beautiful, and worthy to shine on the fingers of a king. In color it resembles the sky when it is pure and free from clouds.<sup>3</sup> No precious stone has greater virtue or beauty. One kind of sapphire is found among the pebbles in the country of Libya; but that which comes from the land of the Turk is more precious. It is called the gem of gems, and is of great value to men and women. It gives comfort to the heart and renders the limbs strong and sound. It takes away envy and perfidy and can set the prisoner at liberty. He who carries it about with him will never have fear. It pacifies those who are angry, and by means of it one can see into the unknown.

It is very valuable in medicine. It cools those who are feverish and who on account of pain are covered with perspiration. When powdered and dissolved in milk it is good for ulcers. It cures headache and diseases of the eyes and tongue. He who wears it must live chastely and honorably; so shall he never feel the distress of poverty.

### CORAL

CORAL grows like a tree in the sea, and at first its color is green. When it reaches the air it becomes hard and red. It is half a foot in length. He who carries it will never be afraid of lightning or tempest. The field in which it is placed will be very fertile, and rendered safe from hail or any other kind of storm. It drives away evil sprits, and gives a good beginning to all undertakings and brings them to a good end.

<sup>1</sup> "Would curses kill as doth the mandrake's groan." — '2 Henry VI,' iii, 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Not poppy, nor mandragora,

Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world." — 'Othello,' iii, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the exquisite line of Dante, 'Purgatorio,' i, 13: —

"Dolce color d'oriental zaffiro."

# TRAVELERS' TALES

## MARCO POLO

**I**N the year 1271 young Marco Polo, a Venetian lad of fifteen, set out in the company of his father and uncle on a visit to the Grand Khan of Tartary. His visit lasted twenty-five years. What he did there and what he saw was past the telling and a long way past believing for any Venetian ear. Three years after his return, in 1298, the man who had passed unscathed through frosts and deserts and the lands of countless barbarous peoples was captured in a war with the Genoese and thrown into prison. There he dictated to Rusticiano of Pisa, a fellow-prisoner and a writer of French romances, so much of the matters of fact encountered on his journeyings as, he thought, might reasonably gain credence. As a result of this method many of the things we should like to know are left out — his adventures by the way, his experience as a trusted emissary of the Great Khan. What he has left us, however, is a great book, partly by reason of its very sobriety and restraint and partly because it represented the first full and authentic news concerning the greater part of Asia which reached the long sceptical western world.

### PROLOGUE TO 'THE BOOK OF SER MARCO POLO'

**G**REAT Princes, Emperors, and Kings, Dukes and Marquises, Counts, Knights, and Burgesses! and People of all degrees who desire to get knowledge of the various races of mankind and of the diversities of the sundry regions of the World, take this Book and cause it to be read to you. For ye shall find therein all kinds of wonderful things, and the divers histories of the Great Hermania, and of Persia, and of the Land of the Tatars, and of India, and of many another country of which our Book doth speak, particularly and in regular succession, according to the description of Messer Marco Polo, a wise and noble citizen of Venice, as he saw them with his own eyes. Some things indeed there be therein which he beheld not; but these he heard from men of credit and veracity. And we shall set down things seen as seen, and things heard as heard only, so that no jot of falsehood may mar the truth of our Book, and that all who shall read it or hear it read may put full faith in the truth of all its contents.

For let me tell you that since our Lord God did mold with his hands our first Father Adam, even until this day, never hath there been Christian or Pagan, or Tatar, or Indian, or any man of any nation, who in his own person hath had so much knowledge and experience of the divers parts of the World and its Wonders as hath had this Messer Marco! And for that reason he be-thought himself that it would be a very great pity did he not cause to be put in writing all the great marvels that he had seen, or on sure information heard of, so that other people who had not these advantages might, by his Book, get such knowledge. And I may tell you that in acquiring this knowl-edge he spent in those various parts of the World good six-and-twenty years. Now, being thereafter an inmate of the Prison at Genoa, he caused Messer Rusticiano of Pisa, who was in the said Prison likewise, to reduce the whole to writing; and this befell in the year 1298 from the birth of Jesus.

### CONCERNING THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

**M**ULEHET is a country in which the Old Man of the Mountain dwelt in former days; and the name means "Place of the Aram." I will tell you his whole history as related by Messer Marco Polo, who heard it from several natives of that region.

The Old Man was called in their language ALOADIN. He had caused a certain valley between two mountains to be enclosed, and had turned it into a garden, the largest and most beautiful that ever was seen, filled with every variety of fruit. In it were erected pavilions and palaces the most elegant that can be imagined, all covered with gilding and exquisite painting. And there were runnels too, flowing freely with wine and milk and honey and water; and numbers of ladies and of the most beautiful damsels in the world, who could play on all manner of instruments, and sung most sweetly, and danced in a manner that it was charming to behold. For the Old Man desired to make his people believe that this was actually Paradise. So he had fashioned it after the description that Mahommet gave of his Paradise, to wit, that it should be a beautiful garden running with conduits of wine and milk and honey and water, and full of lovely women for the delectation of all its inmates. And sure enough the Saracens of those parts believed that it *was* Paradise!

Now no man was allowed to enter the Garden save those whom he intended to be his ASHISHIN. There was a Fortress at the entrance to the Garden, strong enough to resist all the world, and there was no other way to get in. He kept at his Court a number of the youths of the country, from 12 to 20 years of age, such as had a taste for soldiering, and to these he used to tell tales about Paradise, just as Mahommet had been wont to do, and

they believed in him just as the Saracens believe in Mahommet. Then he would introduce them into his garden, some four, or six, or ten at a time, having first made them drink a certain potion which cast them into a deep sleep, and then causing them to be lifted and carried in. So when they awoke, they found themselves in the Garden.

## HOW THE OLD MAN USED TO TRAIN HIS ASSASSINS

WHEN therefore they awoke and found themselves in a place so charming they deemed that it was Paradise in very truth. And the ladies and damsels dallied with them to their hearts' content, so that they had what young men would have; and with their own good-will they never would have quitted the place.

Now this Prince whom we call the Old One kept his Court in grand and noble style, and made those simple hill-folks about him believe firmly that he was a great Prophet. And when he wanted one of his *Ashishin* to send on any mission, he would cause that potion whereof I spoke to be given to one of the youths in the garden, and then had him carried into his Palace. So when the young man awoke, he found himself in the Castle, and no longer in that Paradise; whereat he was not very well pleased. He was then conducted to the Old Man's presence, and bowed before him with great veneration as believing himself to be in the presence of a true Prophet. The Prince would then ask whence he came, and he would reply that he came from Paradise! and that it was exactly such as Mahommet had described it in the Law. This of course gave the others who stood by, and who had not been admitted, the greatest desire to enter therein.

So when the Old Man would have any Prince slain, he would say to such a youth: "Go thou and slay So and So; and when thou returnest my Angels shall bear thee into Paradise. And shouldst thou die, natheless even so will I send my Angels to carry thee back into Paradise." So he caused them to believe; and thus there was no order of his that they would not affront any peril to execute, for the great desire they had to get back into that Paradise of his. And in this manner the Old One got his people to murder anyone whom he desired to get rid of. Thus, too, the great dread that he inspired all Princes withal, made them become his tributaries in order that he might abide at peace and amity with them.

I should also tell you that the Old Man had certain others under him, who copied his proceedings and acted exactly in the same manner. One of these was sent into the territory of Damascus, and the other into Curdistan.

## HOW THE OLD MAN CAME BY HIS END

NOW it came to pass, in the year of Christ's Incarnation, 1252, that Alaü, Lord of the Tatars of the Levant, heard tell of these great crimes of the Old Man, and resolved to make an end of him. So he took and sent one of his Barons with a great Army to that Castle, and they besieged it for three years, but they could not take it, so strong was it. And indeed if they had had food within it never would have been taken. But after being besieged those three years they ran short of victual, and were taken. The Old Man was put to death with all his men. And since that time he has had no successor; and there was an end to all his villainies.

## OF THE GREAT RIVER OF BADASHAN

IN leaving Badashan you ride twelve days between east and northeast, ascending a river that runs through land belonging to a brother of the Prince of Badashan, and containing a good many towns and villages and scattered habitations. The people are Mahommetans, and valiant in war. At the end of those twelve days you come to a province of no great size, extending indeed no more than three days' journey in any direction, and this is called VOKHAN. The people worship Mahommet, and they have a peculiar language. They are gallant soldiers, and they have a chief whom they call NONE, which is as much as to say *Count*, and they are liegemen to the Prince of Badashan.

There are numbers of wild beasts of all sorts in this region. And when you leave this little country, and ride three days northeast, always among mountains, you get to such a height that 'tis said to be the highest place in the world! And when you have got to this height you find a fine river running through a plain clothed with the finest pasture in the world; insomuch that a lean beast there will fatten to your heart's content in ten days. There are great numbers of all kinds of wild beasts; among others, wild sheep of great size, whose horns are good six palms in length. From these horns the shepherds make great bowls to eat from, and they use the horns also to enclose folds for their cattle at night.

The plain is called PAMIER, and you ride across it for twelve days together, finding nothing but a desert without habitations or any green thing, so that travelers are obliged to carry with them whatever they have need of. The region is so lofty and cold that you do not even see any birds flying. And I must notice also that because of this great cold, fire does not burn so brightly, nor give out so much heat as usual, nor does it cook food so effectually.

Now, if we go on with our journey towards the east-northeast, we travel a good forty days, continually passing over mountains and hills, or through valleys, and crossing many rivers and tracts of wilderness. And in all this way you find neither habitation of man, nor any green thing, but must carry with you whatever you require. The country is called BOLOR. The people dwell high up in the mountains, and are savage Idolaters, living only by the chase, and clothing themselves in the skins of beasts. They are in truth an evil race.

### OF THE CITY OF CHANDU, AND THE KAAN'S PALACE THERE

AND when you have ridden three days from the city last mentioned, between northeast and north, you come to a city called CHANDU, which was built by the Kaan now reigning. There is at this place a very fine marble Palace, the rooms of which are all gilt and painted with figures of men and beasts and birds, and with a variety of trees and flowers, all executed with such exquisite art that you regard them with delight and astonishment.

Round this Palace a wall is built, inclosing a compass of 16 miles, and inside the Park there are fountains and rivers and brooks, and beautiful meadows, with all kinds of wild animals (excluding such as are of ferocious nature), which the Emperor has procured and placed there to supply food for his gerfalcons and hawks, which he keeps there in mew. Of these there are more than 200 gerfalcons alone, without reckoning the other hawks. The Kaan himself goes every week to see his birds sitting in mew, and sometimes he rides through the park with a leopard behind him on his horse's croup; and then if he sees any animal that takes his fancy, he slips his leopard at it, and the game when taken is made over to feed the hawks in mew. This he does for diversion.

Moreover he has another Palace built of cane, of which I must give you a description. It is gilt all over, and most elaborately finished inside. The roof, like the rest, is formed of canes, covered with a varnish so strong and excellent that no amount of rain will rot them. These canes are a good 3 palms in girth, and from 10 to 15 paces in length. In short, the whole Palace is built of these canes, which (I may mention) serve also for a great variety of other useful purposes. The construction of the Palace is so devised that it can be taken down and put up again with great celerity; and it can all be taken to pieces and removed whithersoever the Emperor may command. When erected, it is braced by more than 200 cords of silk.

The Lord abides at this Park of his, dwelling sometimes in the Marble Palace and sometimes in the Cane Palace for three months of the year, to

wit, June, July, and August; preferring this residence because it is by no means hot; in fact it is a very cool place. When the 28th day of August arrives he takes his departure, and the Cane Palace is taken to pieces. But I must tell you what happens when he goes away from this Palace every year on the 28th of the August.

You must know that the Kaan keeps an immense stud of white horses and mares; in fact more than 10,000 of them, and all pure white without a speck. The milk of these mares is drunk by himself and his family, and by none else, except by those of one great tribe that have also the privilege of drinking it. This privilege was granted them by Chinghis Kaan, on account of a certain victory that they helped him to win long ago. The name of the tribe is HORIAD.

Now when these mares are passing across the country, and anyone falls in with them, be he the greatest lord in the land, he must not presume to pass until the mares have gone by; he must either tarry where he is, or go a half-day's journey round if need so be, so as not to come nigh them; for they are to be treated with the greatest respect. Well, when the Lord sets out from the Park on the 28th of August, as I told you, the milk of all those mares is taken and sprinkled on the ground. And this is done on the injunction of the Idolaters and Idol-priests, who say that it is an excellent thing to sprinkle that milk on the ground every 28th of August, so that the Earth and the Air and the False Gods shall have their share of it, and the Spirits likewise that inhabit the Air and the Earth. And thus those beings will protect and bless the Kaan and his children and his wives and his folk and his gear, and his cattle and his horses, his corn and all that is his. After this is done, the Emperor is off and away.

Translated by Henry Yule

## SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE

THE most entertaining book in early English prose is the one entitled 'The Marvelous Adventures of Sir John Maundevile [or Mandeville], Knight: being his Voyage and Travel which treateth of the way to Jerusalem and of the Marvels of Ind with other Islands and Countries.' The book is a compilation from other books of travel well known in the fourteenth century, and made by a French physician, Jehan de Bourgogne, who hid his identity under the pseudonym of the English knight of St. Albans. Research has proved beyond doubt that the book was first written in French, and then translated into English, Latin, Italian, German, Flemish, and even into Irish. It has been further shown that the author drew largely on the works of his contemporaries. The chapters on Asiatic history and geography

are from a book dictated in French at Poitiers in 1307, by the Armenian monk Hayton; the description of the Tatars is from the work of the Franciscan monk John de Plano Carpini; the account of Prester John is taken from the Epistle ascribed to him, and from stories current in the fourteenth century. There are, furthermore, large borrowings from the book of the Lombard Franciscan friar Odoric of Pordenone, who traveled in the Orient between 1317 and 1330, and on his return had his adventures set down in Latin by a brother of his order. The itinerary of the German knight William of Boldensele, about 1336, is also laid under contribution.

The book professes to be primarily a guide for pilgrims to Jerusalem by four routes, with a handbook of the holy places. But Sir John's love of the picturesque and the marvelous, and his delight in a good story, lead him to linger along the way: nay, to go out of his way in order to pick up a legend or a tale wherewith to enliven the dry facts of the route; as if his pilgrims, weary and footsore with long day journeys, needed a bit of diversion to cheer them along the way. When, after many a detour, he is finally brought into Palestine, the pilgrim is made to feel that every inch is holy ground. The guide scrupulously locates even the smallest details of Bible history. He takes it all on faith. He knows nothing of "higher criticism," nor does he believe in spiritual interpretation. He will point you out the "rock where Jacob was sleeping when he saw the angels go up and down a ladder. . . . And upon that rock sat our Lady, and learned her psalter. . . . Also at the right side of that Dead Sea dwelleth yet the Wife of Lot in Likeness of a Salt Stone. . . . And in that Plain is the Tomb of Job. . . . And there is the Cistern where Joseph, which they sold, was cast in of by his Brethren. . . . There nigh is Gabriel's Well where our Lord was wont to bathe him, when He was young, and from that Well bare the Water oftentime to His Mother. And in that Well she washed oftentime the Clothes of her Son Jesu Christ. . . . On that Hill, and in that same Place, at the Day of Doom, 4 Angels with 4 Trumpets shall blow and raise all Men that have suffered Death."

He touches on whatever would appeal to the pious imagination of the pilgrims, and helps them to visualize the truths of their religion. When he leaves Palestine — a country he knew perhaps better than ever man before or since his day — and goes into the more mythical regions of Ind the Little and More, Cathay and Persia, his imagination fairly runs riot. With an Oriental love of the gorgeous he describes the "Royalty of the Palace of the Great Chan," or of Prester John's abode — splendors not to be outdone even by the genie of Aladdin's wonderful lamp. He takes us into regions lustrous with gold and silver, diamonds and other precious stones. We have indeed in the latter half of the book whole chapters rivaling the 'Arabian Nights' in their weird luxurious imaginings, and again in their grotesque creations of men and beasts and plant life. What matter where Sir John got his material for his marvels — his rich, monster-teeming Eastern world, with its Amazons and

pigmies; its people with hounds' heads, that "be great folk and well-fighting"; its wild geese with two heads, and lions all white and great as oxen; men with eyes in their shoulders, and men without heads; "folk that have the Face all flat, all plain, without Nose and without Mouth"; "folk that have great Ears and long that hang down to their Knees"; and "folk that run marvelously swift with one foot so large that it serves them as umbrella against the sun when they lie down to rest"; the Hippotaynes, half man and half horse; griffins that "have the Body upwards as an Eagle and beneath as a Lion, and truly they say truth, that they be of that shape." We find hints of many old acquaintances of the wonder-world of story-books, and fables from classic soil. The giants with one eye in the middle of the forehead are close brothers to the Cyclops Polyphemus, whom Ulysses outwitted. The adamant rocks were surely washed by the same seas that swirled around the magnetic mountain whereon Sindbad the Sailor was wrecked. "Sir John" was in truth a masterful borrower, levying tribute on all the superstitions, the legends, the stories, and the fables current in his time. He took his monsters out of Pliny, his miracles out of legends, his strange stories out of romances. He meant to leave no rumor or invention unchronicled; and he prefaces his most amazing assertions with "They say" or "Men say, but I have not seen it." He fed the gullibility of his age to the top of its bent, and compiled a book enormously popular in the fourteenth century and still full of entertainment.

## THE MARVELOUS RICHES OF PRESTER JOHN

From 'The Adventures'

**I**N the Land of Prester John be many divers Things and many precious Stones, so great and so large, that Men make of them Vessels, as Platters, Dishes, and Cups. And many other Marvels be there, that it were too cumbrous and too long to put in Writing of Books; but of the principal Isles and of his Estate and of his Law, I shall tell you some Part. . . .

And he hath under him 72 Provinces, and in every Province is a King. And these Kings have Kings under them, and all be Tributaries to Prester John. And he hath in his Lordships many great Marvels.

For in his Country is the Sea that Men call the Gravelly Sea, that is all Gravel and Sand, without any Drop of Water, and it ebbeth and floweth in great Waves as other Seas do, and it is never still nor at Peace in any manner of Season. And no Man may pass that Sea by Ship, nor by any manner of Craft, and therefore may no Man know what Land is beyond that Sea. And albeit that it have no Water, yet Men find therein and on the Banks full good Fishes of other manner of Nature and shape than Men find in any other Sea, and they be of right good Taste and delicious for Man's Meat.

And a 3 Days' Journey long from that Sea be great Mountains, out of the which goeth out a great River that cometh out of Paradise. And it is full of precious Stones, without any Drop of Water, and it runneth through the Desert on the one Side, so that it maketh the Sea gravelly; and it runneth into that Sea, and there it endeth. And that River runneth, also, 3 Days in the Week and bringeth with him great Stones and the Rocks also therewith, and that great Plenty. And anon, as they be entered into the Gravelly Sea, they be seen no more, but lost forevermore. And in those 3 Days that that River runneth, no Man dare enter into it; but on other Days Men dare enter well enough.

Also beyond that River, more upward to the Deserts, is a great Plain all gravelly, between the Mountains. And in that Plain, every Day at the Sun-rising, begin to grow small Trees, and they grow till Midday, bearing Fruit; but no Man dare take of that Fruit, for it is a Thing of Faerie. And after Midday they decrease and enter again into the Earth, so that at the going down of the Sun they appear no more. And so they do, every Day. And that is a great Marvel.

In that Desert be many Wild Men, that be hideous to look on; for they be horned, and they speak naught, but they grunt, as Pigs. And there is also great Plenty of wild Hounds. And there be many Popinjays [or Parrots] that they call Psittakes in their Language. And they speak of their own Nature, and say "*Salve!*" [God save you!] to Men that go through the Deserts, and speak to them as freely as though it were a Man that spoke. And they that speak well have a large Tongue, and have 5 Toes upon a Foot. And there be also some of another Manner, that have but 3 Toes upon a Foot; and they speak not, or but little, for they cannot but cry.

This Emperor Prester John when he goeth into Battle against any other Lord, he hath no Banners borne before him; but he hath 3 Crosses of Gold, fine, great, and high, full of precious Stones, and every one of the Crosses be set in a Chariot, full richly arrayed. And to keep every Cross, be ordained 10,000 Men of Arms and more than 100,000 Men on Foot, in manner as when Men would keep a Standard in our Countries, when that we be in a Land of War. . . .

He dwelleth commonly in the City of Susa. And there is his principal Palace, that is so rich and noble that no Man will believe it by Estimation, but he had seen it. And above the chief Tower of the Palace be 2 round Pommels or Balls of Gold, and in each of them be 2 Carbuncles great and large, that shine full bright upon the Night. And the principal gates of his Palace be of precious Stone that Men call Sardonyx, and the Border and the Bars be of Ivory. And the Windows of the Halls and Chambers be of Crystal. And the Tables whereon Men eat, some be of Emeralds, some of Amethyst, and some of Gold, full of precious Stones; and the Pillars that bear up the Tables be of the same precious Stones. And of the Steps to go

up to his Throne, where he sitteth at Meat, one is of Onyx, another is of Crystal, and another of green Jasper, another of Amethyst, another of Sardine, another of Cornelian, and the 7th, that he setteth his Feet on, is of Chrysolite. And all these Steps be bordered with fine Gold, with the other precious Stones, set with great orient Pearls. And the Sides of the Seat of his Throne be of Emeralds, and bordered with Gold full nobly, and dubbed with other precious Stones and great Pearls. And all the Pillars in his Chamber be of fine Gold with Precious Stones, and with many Carbuncles, that give Light upon the Night to all People. And albeit that the Carbuncles give Light right enough, nevertheless, at all Times burneth a Vessel of Crystal full of Balm, to give good Smell and Odor to the Emperor, and to void away all wicked Eyes and Corruptions.

### FROM HEBRON TO BETHLEHEM

From the 'Adventures'

AND in Hebron be all the Sepultures of the Patriarchs — Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob; and of their Wives, Eve, Sarah, and Rebecca and of Leah; the which Sepultures the Saracens keep full carefully, and have the Place in great Reverence for the holy Fathers, the Patriarchs that lie there. And they suffer no Christian Man to enter into the Place, but if it be of special Grace of the Sultan; for they hold Christian Men and Jews as Dogs, and they say, that they should not enter into so holy a Place. And Men call that Place, where they lie, Double Splunk [*Spelunca Duplex*], or Double Cave, or Double Ditch, forasmuch as one lieth above another. And the Saracens call that Place in their Language, "*Karicarba*," that is to say "The Place of Patriarchs." And the Jews call that Place "*Arboth*." And in that same Place was Abraham's House, and there he sat and saw 3 Persons, and worshiped but one; as Holy Writ saith, "*Tres vidit et unum adoravit*"; that is to say, "He saw 3 and worshiped one": and those same were the Angels that Abraham received into his House.

And right fast by that Place is a Cave in the Rock, where Adam and Eve dwelled when they were put out of Paradise; and there got they their Children. And in that same Place was Adam formed and made, after that, that some Men say (for Men were wont to call that Place the Field of Damascus, because that it was in the Lordship of Damascus), and from thence was he translated into the Paradise of Delights, as they say; and after he was driven out of Paradise he was left there. And the same Day that he was put in Paradise, the same Day he was put out, for anon, he sinned. There beginneth the Vale of Hebron, that endureth nigh to Jerusalem. There the Angel com-

manded Adam that he should dwell with his Wife Eve, of the which he begat Seth; of the which Tribe, that is to say Kindred, Jesu Christ was born.

In that Valley is a Field, where Men draw out of the Earth a Thing that Men call Cambile, and they eat it instead of Spice, and they bear it away to sell. And Men may not make the Hole or the Cave, where it is taken out of the Earth, so deep or so wide, but that it is, at the Year's End, full again up to the Sides, through the Grace of God. . . .

From Hebron Men go to Bethlehem in half a Day, for it is but 5 Mile; and it is a full fair Way, by Plains and Woods full delectable. Bethlehem is a little City, long and narrow and well walled, and on each Side enclosed with good Ditches: and it was wont to be clept Ephrata, as Holy Writ saith, "*Ecce, audimus eum in Ephrata,*" that is to say, "Lo, we heard it in Ephrata." And toward the East End of the City is a full fair Church and a gracious, and it hath many Towers, Pinnacles, and Corners, full strong and curiously made; and within that Church be 44 Pillars of Marble, great and fair. . . .

Also besides the Choir of the Church, at the right Side, as Men come downward 16 Steps, is the Place where our Lord was born, that is full well adorned with Marble, and full richly painted with Gold, Silver, Azure, and other Colors. And 3 Paces beyond is the Crib of the Ox and the Ass. And beside that is the Place where the Star fell, that led the 3 Kings, Jasper, Melchior, and Balthazar (but Men of Greece call them thus, "Galgathe, Malgalathe, and Seraphie," and the Jews call them in this manner, in Hebrew, "Appelius, Amerrius, and Damasus"). These 3 Kings offered to our Lord Gold, Incense, and Myrrh, and they met together through Miracle of God; for they met together in a City in Ind, that Men call Cassak, that is a 53 Days' Journey from Bethlehem; and they were at Bethlehem the 13th Day; and that was the 4th Day after that they had seen the Star, when they met in that City, and thus they were in 9 days from that City at Bethlehem, and that was a great Miracle.

Also, under the Cloister of the Church, by 18 Steps at the right Side, is the Charnel-house of the Innocents, where their Bodies lie. And before the Place where our Lord was born is the Tomb of St. Jerome, that was a Priest and a Cardinal, that translated the Bible and the Psalter from Hebrew into Latin: and without the Minster is the Chair that he sat in when he translated it. And fast beside that Church, at 60 Fathom, is a Church of St. Nicholas, where our Lady rested her after she was delivered of our Lord; and forasmuch as she had too much Milk in her Paps, that grieved her, she milked them on the red Stones of Marble, so that the Traces may yet be seen, in the Stones, all white.

And ye shall understand, that all that dwell in Bethlehem be Christian Men.

And there be fair Vines about the City, and great plenty of Wine, that the

Christian Men have made. But the Saracens till not the Vines, neither drink they any Wine: for their Books of their Law, that Mohammet gave them, which they call their "Al Koran" (and some call it "Mesaph," and in another language it is clept "Harme") — the same Book forbiddeth them to drink Wine. For in that Book, Mohammet cursed all those that drink Wine and all them that sell it: for some Men say, that he slew once an Hermit in his Drunkenness, that he loved full well; and therefore he cursed Wine and them that drink it. But his Curse be turned onto his own Head, as Holy Writ saith, "*Et in verticem ipsius iniquitas ejus descendet*"; that is to say, "His Wickedness shall turn and fall onto his own Head."

And also the Saracens breed no Pigs, nor eat they any Swine's Flesh, for they say it is Brother to Man, and it was forbidden by the old Law; and they hold him accursed that eateth thereof. Also in the Land of Palestine and in the Land of Egypt, they eat but little or none of Flesh of Veal or of Beef, but if the Beast be so old, that he may no more work for old Age; for it is forbidden, because they have but few of them; therefore they nourish them to till their Lands.

In this City of Bethlehem was David the King born; and he had 60 Wives, and the first wife was called Michal; and also he had 300 Lemans.

And from Bethlehem unto Jerusalem is but 2 Mile; and in the Way to Jerusalem half a Mile from Bethlehem is a Church, where the Angel said to the Shepherds of the Birth of Christ. And in that Way is the Tomb of Rachel, that was the Mother of Joseph the Patriarch; and she died anon after that she was delivered of her Son Benjamin. And there she was buried by Jacob her Husband; and he made set 12 great Stones on her, in Token that she had born 12 Children. In the same Way, half a Mile from Jerusalem, appeared the Star to the 3 Kings. In that Way also be many Churches of Christian Men, by the which Men go towards the City of Jerusalem.

## MIDDLE ENGLISH POETRY

THE literary supremacy of King Alfred's West Saxon kingdom was brought to an abrupt termination by the Norman Conquest in 1066, and it was some time thereafter before there was any demand for books in the English vernacular. By the year 1200, however, the English idiom, which had continued to be spoken in spite of the court's preference for French and the cleric's use of Latin, began once more to find literary expression. In the absence of any common literary standards each writer composed in the dialect of his native region. This is true even of Chaucer and his contemporary and friend John Gower, who wrote the dialect of the city of London. In part owing to the prestige of these poets and in part to the growing importance of the capital, the dialect of London with slight modifications during the following century became the standard English out of which our own has developed.

In comparison with the brilliant medieval literatures of the Continent, medieval English literature often appears derivative and second-rate; in many cases an adaptation for an humble audience of things that were done much better in France. The thirteenth century, however, is far from barren. The priest Layamon, who about 1200 composed his 'Brut,' an account of the legendary kings of Britain, is a sturdy personality and his poem is a right English poem. 'The Owl and the Nightingale' (about 1255) is an effective handling of a popular *débat*, and romances like 'King Horn' and 'Havelock the Dane' maintain something of the old heroic tradition and owe less than some of the later romances to French models.

The best period of Middle English literature is the second half of the fourteenth century, the period of Chaucer and of Gower, of 'Piers Plowman' and of the nameless author of 'Gawain and the Green Knight' and 'The Pearl.' By this time English had come fully to its own as a literary medium and attained to levels of excellence which were not approached again until the Elizabethan period.

In prose the principal name of the period is Wycliffe, who besides his controversial writings exercised a controlling influence over the first English version of the Scriptures. The language and rhythms of the English Bible, however, owe more to Tyndale (first quarter of the sixteenth century) than to his fourteenth-century predecessors. With Caxton, in the later fifteenth century, prose is stirred to artistic self-consciousness. The peculiar charm of this period may be caught from Malory's 'Morte Darthur,' which Caxton printed.

## THE VISION OF WILLIAM CONCERNING PIERS PLOWMAN

Mystery surrounds the late fourteenth century poem generally known as 'Piers Plowman.' Judging from the number of manuscripts extant, only two Middle English poems, 'The Canterbury Tales' and the anonymous 'Prick of Conscience,' surpassed it in popularity. Yet we have no certain knowledge whether one or more authors wrote it; whether, as editors assume, one of the writers was named William Langland; and even whether it should be regarded as one poem or as a collection of poems. We are far from knowing the precise year in which the greater part was written. Its ideas are by no means always easy to follow.

'Piers Plowman' was circulated in three principal versions. The A Text, by far the shortest, belongs to about 1362; the B Text to 1377; and the C Text to about 1393. The last of these, which is the longest, comes to approximately 7500 lines. An alliterative meter without rhyme is used throughout.

The poem recounts a series of dreams or visions coming to a man at long intervals in his life. In each dream are several episodes. The dreamer sees first "a fair field full of folk." A lady named Holy Church gives him elementary instruction in the meaning of life. The most important episodes which follow are the trial of Lady Meed (a scene of political significance), the confession and absolution of the Sins, and the coming of Piers Plowman, who leads a group of pilgrims, protects them from Hunger, and promises them eternal salvation if they keep the terms of his pardon, or "Do Well." This summarizes the First Part, which deals with the duty of the laity. The Second Part, which is longer, treats the duty of the clergy. Three states of holiness are described as Do Well, Do Bet and Do Best, the first and last being two grades of the life of action while the second state is the life of contemplation. The figure of Piers Plowman appears in this Part also, but in a more exalted form.

Most of the poem resembles the typical medieval sermon, dealing with faith, devotion, and morality. Long passages, however, deal with political and economic conditions and with education. Although the style is popular and racy, the work shows some philosophical powers and some learning. Homely realism and humor occur even where a curious and often original allegorical machinery is employed. The poem gives a broad view of the manners and doctrines of the age. It betrays the profound social unrest which foreshadowed the doom of many of the old institutions. Its teaching nevertheless in both politics and religion is more often conservative than radical.

Critics have usually regarded it as among Middle English poems second in merit only to the best of Chaucer. It affords insight into many experiences which Chaucer touches but slightly. Thus the work shows deep mysticism and a wide acquaintance with the lowest orders of society.

## THE FIELD FULL OF FOLK

**I**N a summer season when the sun was softest,  
 Shrouded in a smock, in shepherd's clothing,  
 In the habit of a hermit of unholy living,  
 I went through this world to witness wonders.  
 On a May morning on a Malvern hillside  
 I saw strange sights like scenes of Faerie.  
 I was weary of wandering and went to rest  
 By the bank of a brook in a broad meadow.  
 As I lay and leaned and looked on the water  
 I slumbered and slept, so sweetly it murmured.

Then I met with marvelous vision.  
 I was in a wilderness; where, I knew not.  
 I looked up at the East at the high sun,  
 And saw a tower on a toft artfully fashioned.  
 A deep dale was beneath with a dungeon in it,  
 And deep ditches and dark, dreadful to see.

A fair field full of folk I found between them,  
 With all manner of men, the meanest and the richest,  
 Working and wandering as the world demanded.  
 Some put them to the plow and practised hardship  
 In setting and sowing and seldom had leisure;  
 They won what wasters consumed in gluttony.  
 Some practised pride and quaint behavior,  
 And came disguised in clothes and features.  
 Prayer and penance prevailed with many.  
 For the love of our Lord they lived in strictness,  
 To have bliss hereafter and heavenly riches.  
 Hermits and anchorites held to their dwellings,  
 Gave up the course of country roving  
 And all lusty living that delights the body.  
 Some turned to trade; they tried barter;  
 And seemed in our sight to succeed better.  
 Some men were mirthful, learned minstrelsies,  
 And got gold as gleemen — a guiltless practice.  
 Yet jesters and janglers, Judas' children,  
 Feigned idle fancies and wore fool's clothing,  
 But had wit if they wished to work as others.  
 What Paul has preached I proffer without glossing:  
*Qui loquitur turpiloquium*,<sup>1</sup> is Lucifer's servant.

<sup>1</sup> He who speaks slander.

Bidders and beggars ride about the country  
With bread to the brim in their bags and bellies;  
They feign that they are famished and fight in the ale-house.  
God wot, they go in gluttony to their chambers  
And rise with ribaldry, like Robert's children.  
Sleep and sloth pursue them always.

Pilgrims and palmers were plighted together  
To seek Saint James and saints in Rome.  
They went on their way with many wise stories,  
And had leave to lie for a lifetime after.

I saw some who said that they sought for relics;  
In each tale that they told their tongue would always  
Speak more than was so, it seemed to my thinking.

A host of hermits with hooked staves  
Went to Walsingham with their wenches behind them.  
These great lubbers and long, who were loath to labor,  
Clothed themselves in copes to be distinguished from others,  
And robed themselves as hermits to roam at their leisure.  
There I found friars of all the four orders,  
Who preached to the people for the profit of their bellies,  
And glossed the gospel to their own good pleasure;  
They coveted their copes, and construed it to their liking.  
Many master-brothers may clothe themselves to their fancy,  
For their money and their merchandise multiply together.  
Since charity has turned chapman to shrive lords and ladies,  
Strange sights have been seen in a few short years.  
Unless they and Holy Church hold closer together  
The worst misery of man will mount up quickly.

There a pardoner preached as priest of the parish,  
And brought out a bull with a bishop's signet  
Said that he himself might assoil all men  
Of all falsehood in fasting and vows that were broken.  
Common folk confided in him and liked his preaching,  
And crept up on cowed knees and kissed his pardons.  
He abused them with brevets and blinded their eyesight;  
His devil's devises drew rings and brooches.  
They gave their gold to keep gluttons,  
And believed in liars and lovers of lechery.  
If the bishop were blessed and worth both his ears  
His seal would not be sent to deceive the people.  
But the power of the bishop is not this preacher's license,  
For the parish priest and the pardoner share the profits together  
Which the poor of the parish would have if these were honest.

Because parishes were poor since the pestilence season,  
 Parsons and parish priests petitioned the bishops  
 For a license to leave and live in London  
 And sing there for simony, for silver is sweet.

Bishops and bachelors, both masters and doctors,  
 Who have cures under Christ and are crowned with the tonsure,  
 In sign of their service to shrive the parish,  
 To pray and preach and give the poor nourishment,  
 Lodge in London in Lent and the long year after;  
 Some are counting coins in the king's chamber,  
 Or in exchequer and chancery challenging his debts  
 From wards and wardmotes, waifs and strays.  
 Some serve as servants to lords and ladies  
 And sit in the seats of steward and butler.  
 They hear mass and matines, and many of their hours  
 Are done without devotion. There is danger that at last  
 Christ in his consistory will curse many.

### THE CONFESSION OF SLOTH

**T**HEN Sloth came all beslobbered, with slime on his eyelids;  
 "I must sit," he said, "or else I shall slumber.

I cannot stand or stoop, and want a stool for kneeling.  
 If I were brought to bed, unless my buttocks made me,  
 No ringing should make me rise till I was ripe for dinner."

He began *benedicite* with a belch and beat his forehead,  
 And roared and raved and snored for a conclusion.

"Awake! awake! wretch," cried Repentance, "make ready for shriving."  
 "If I should die today I should never do it.

I cannot say *pater noster* perfectly, as the priest sings it.  
 I know rhymes of Robin Hood and Randolph Earl of Chester,  
 But of our Lord or of our Lady I have learned nothing.

I have made forty vows and forgotten them on the morrow.

I never performed the penance as the priest commanded,

Nor was sorry for my sins as a man should be.

And if I pray at my beads, unless Wrath bids me,

What I tell with my tongue is two miles from my meaning.

I am occupied each day, on holy days and all days,

With idle tales at ale, or at other times in churches.

Rarely do I remember God's pain and passion.

I never visit the feeble nor the fettered men in prison.

I had rather hear ribaldry or a summer game of cobblers,  
 Or lies to laugh at and belie my neighbor,  
 Than all that the four evangelists have ever written.  
 Vigils and fasting days slip unheeded.  
 I lie abed in Lent with my lemman beside me,  
 And when matines and mass are over I go to my friars.  
 If I reach to *ite missa est* <sup>1</sup> I have done my duty.  
 Sometimes I am not shriven, unless sickness force me,  
 More than twice in two years, and then I do it by guess work.

I have been priest and parson for the past thirty winters,  
 Yet I know neither the scales nor the singing nor the Saints' Legends.  
 I can find an hare afield or frighten him from his furrow  
 Better than read *beatus vir* <sup>2</sup> or *beati omnes*,<sup>3</sup>  
 Construe their clauses and instruct my parishioners.  
 I can hold love-days and hear a reve's reckoning,  
 But I cannot construe a line in the Canons or Decretals.

If I beg or borrow and it be not tallied  
 I forget it as quickly; men can ask me  
 Six times or seven and I will swear to the falsehood.  
 So I trouble true men twenty times over.

The salary of my servants is seldom even.  
 I answer angrily when the accounts are reckoned,  
 And my workman's wages are wrath and cursing.  
 If any man does me a favor or helps me in trouble,  
 I answer courtesy with unkindness, and cannot understand it.  
 I have now and I have ever had a hawk's manners.  
 I am not lured with love where nothing lies in the fingers.

Sixty times I, Sloth, have since forgotten  
 The kindness that fellow Christians have granted to me.  
 Sometimes I spill—in speech or silence—  
 Both flesh and fish and many other victuals,  
 Bread and ale, butter, milk and cheeses,  
 All slobbered in my service till they may serve no man.

I was a roamer in my youth and reckless in study,  
 And ever since have been a beggar from foul slothfulness;  
*Heu mihi! quia sterilem vitam duxi juvenilem!* <sup>4</sup>  
 "Do you repent," said Repentance—but the wretch was swooning,  
 Till Vigilate, the watcher, threw water on his forehead,  
 And flung it in his face, and vehemently addressed him,

<sup>1</sup> The concluding words of the mass.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms, i or cxii.

<sup>3</sup> Psalms, cxxviii.

<sup>4</sup> Woe is me that I led such an unprofitable a life in my youth.

And cried, "Beware of Desperation, that betrays many!  
 Say, 'I am sorry for my sins,' say it and believe it,  
 Beat your breast and beseech Him to have mercy;  
 For there is no guilt so great that His goodness is not greater."

Then Sloth sat up and so crossed himself quickly,  
 And made a vow before God: "For my foul living  
 Every Sunday this seven years, unless sickness keep me,  
 I will go down before daybreak to the dear chapel,  
 And hear matins and mass, like a monk in his cloister.  
 No ale after meat shall hold me absent  
 Till I have heard even-song, I vow by the rood-tree."

### PIERS THE PLOWMAN'S PARDON

**P**IERS," said the priest, "give me your pardon quickly.  
 I shall translate the text and turn it into English."

Piers opened his pardon at the priest's bidding.

I was behind them both and beheld all the charter.

All lay in two lines, and not a leaf further.

The witness was Truth; and it was written thus:

*Et qui bona egerunt, ibunt in vitam eternam.*

*Qui vero mala, in ignem eternum.*<sup>1</sup>

"Peter," said the priest, "there is no pardon in it,  
 But Do Well and have well, and God shall have your soul,  
 And do evil and have evil, and you may hope only  
 That after your death day the devil shall take you."

Then Piers in pure wrath pulled it to pieces,

And said: "*Si ambulavero in medio umbrae mortis, non timebo mala, quoniam tu mecum es.*"<sup>2</sup>

I shall stop my sowing," said Piers, "and cease from such hard labor,  
 Nor be so busy now about my comfort.

Prayers and penance shall be my plow hereafter.

I shall weep when I should sleep, though wheat bread fail me.

The prophet ate bread in penance and in sorrow.

The psalter says that so did many others.

He who loves God loyally has livelihood easily.

*Fuerunt mihi lacrimae meae panes die ac nocte.*<sup>3</sup>

And unless Luke lie, birds teach us the lesson

<sup>1</sup> And they whose works are good shall pass into life eternal, but they whose works are evil into fire everlasting.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms, xxiii, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Psalms, xlii, 3.

Not to be too busy about the world's pleasures.

*Ne solliciti sitis*, he says in the gospel,

And gives us guidance in governing ourselves rightly.

Who finds the fowls their food in winter?

They have no garner to go to, but God provisions them."

"What," said the priest to Perkin, "Peter, bless me,  
You are lettered a little; where did you learn reading?"

"Abstinence, the abbeß," said Piers, "taught the A B C to me,  
And Conscience came forward and declared much further."

"If you were a priest, Piers," he said, "you might preach at your liking,  
And be a doctor in divinity, with *Dixit insipiens*."

"Rude rogue," said Piers, "you have read little in the Bible.

You have seldom seen Solomon's proverbs:

*Ejice derisores et jurgia cum eis, ne crescant*,"<sup>4</sup> etc.

The priest and Perkin opposed each other,

And at their wrangling I awoke and saw the world about me.

And the sun sailing in the southern heaven.

Meatless and moneyless on the Malvern hillsides,

I went on my way, wondering at the vision.

Often has this vision forced me to wonder

If what I saw asleep were so indeed.

I pondered pensively on Piers the Plowman;

On what a pardon Piers had for all peoples' comfort,

And how the priest impugned it with two pert words.

I am a doubter of dreams, for they deceive men often.

Cato and the Canonists counsel us never

To seek assurance in dreams, for *sompnia ne cures*.<sup>5</sup>

But a book of the Bible bears witness.

Translated by Henry W. Wells

## THE PEARL

THE PEARL' belongs to the second half of the fourteenth century, and is found in the same manuscript and is presumably by the same author as 'Gawain and the Green Knight.' It is written in a literary dialect that has been assigned to the northwestern part of England. The structure of its rhymed and linked stanza is elaborate and alliteration is a constant feature. Like so much of medieval poetry 'The Pearl' is a vision, in which the author beholds his lost Pearl as a radiant damsel in Paradise, with many attributes of the Virgin herself. From her he is instructed that the joys of Heaven are, by the grace of God, equal for all those who are ad-

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs, xxii, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Pay no heed to dreams.

mitted to them. To present this theme in its most striking form the author has chosen the case of a child dying in infancy. The poem has a certain elegiac cast and a profound sincerity which have led to the inference that it represents a lament for the personal loss of a little daughter. Whether this be so or not, the author's interest evidently lies in asserting that the joys of Heaven are for the innocent, and those who have lost this "pearl of great price" must recover it, by forsaking the world, before they may enter into them. This lesson the poet adorns with the most delicately wrought symbolism and rich descriptive imagery.

## FROM 'THE PEARL'

PEARL! fair enow for princes' pleasure,  
 so deftly set in gold so pure,  
 from orient lands, I durst avouch —  
 ne'er saw I a gem its peer,  
 so round, so comely-shaped withal,  
 so small, with sides so smooth —  
 where'er I judged of radiant gems,  
 I placed my pearl supreme.  
 I lost it — in an arbor — alas!  
 It passed from me through grass to earth.  
 I pine, despoiled of love's dominion —  
 of mine own, my spotless pearl.

Sithence how oft have I tarried there,  
 where it vanished — seeking the joy  
 that whilom scattered all my woe,  
 and raised so high my bliss!  
 It doth but pierce my heart with pangs,  
 and kindle my breast with sorrow;  
 yet ne'er was heard so sweet a song  
 as the still hour let steal to me thither.  
 Ah me! what thoughts stole there to my mind!  
 To think of my fair one o'erlaid with clay! —  
 O earth! thou marrest a joyous theme —  
 mine own, my spotless pearl. . . .

On a day I entered that arbor green —  
 fain would I picture the place in words:  
 'twas August, the year's high festival,

when the corn is cut with the keen-edged hook;  
where my pearl had erewhile rolled adown  
was shaded with herbage full beauteous and bright —  
gillyflowers, ginger, and gromwell-seed,  
and peonies sprent between.  
But fair as was the sight to see,  
fairer the fragrance that wafted thence,  
where dwelleth that glory, I wot and ween —  
my precious, my spotless pearl.

I gazed on the sight: my hands I clasped;  
chill sorrow seized my heart:  
wild grief made tumult in my breast,  
though reason whispered "peace."  
I wailed for my pearl, held fast from me there —  
dread doubt fought hard with doubt —  
though Christ's self shewed whence comfort is,  
my will was bondman to woe.  
I fell upon that flowery plat;  
such fragrance rose to my brain,  
that soon I was lulled in a reverie  
o'er my precious, my spotless pearl.

My spirit thence sped forth into space,  
my body lay there entranced on that mound,  
my soul, by grace of God, had fared  
in quest of adventure, where marvels be.  
I knew not where that region was;  
I was borne, iwis, where the cliffs rose sheer;  
toward a forest I set my face,  
where rocks so radiant were to see,  
that none can trow how rich was the light,  
the gleaming glory that glinted therefrom,  
for never a web by mortal spun  
was half so wondrous fair.

The hillsides there were crowned  
with crystal cliffs full clear,  
and holts and woods, all bright with boles  
blue as the blue of Inde,  
and trembling leaves, thick on every branch,  
as burnished silver shone —  
with shimmering sheen they glistened,

touched by the gleam of the glades —  
 and the gravel that rolled upon that strand  
 was precious orient pearls.  
 The sun's own light had paled before  
 that sight so wondrous fair.

'Mid the magic charm of those wondrous hills  
 my spirit forgot all woe;  
 fruit there of such rare flavor grew,  
 'twas food to make one strong:  
 birds flew there in peace together,  
 of flaming hues, both small and great;  
 nor citern-string, nor minstrel,  
 can tell their joyous glee,  
 for lo! whene'er they beat their wings,  
 they sang with sweet accord:  
 no rapture could so stir a man  
 as their song and that wondrous sight. . . .

More of such wealth was there withal  
 than I might tell, though leisure were mine,  
 For earthly spirit cannot grasp  
 a tenth part of that fair delight; —  
 certes methought that paradise  
 lay those broad banks beyond:  
 I trowed the stream was some device —  
 a lake in the midst of a pleasance;  
 beyond the brook, by glen or glade,  
 I trowed to find where the moat was marked:  
 but the water was deep — I durst not pass;  
 and ever I longed still more and more.

More and more, and yet still more  
 I longed to see beyond that brook;  
 for if 'twas fair where I passed along,  
 far fairer was that further land.  
 I stayed my steps; I gazed about;  
 I sought full hard to find some ford —  
 the farther I wended along the strand  
 the way grew harder, iwis:  
 no peril methought would make me turn  
 where such rich treasures were —  
 when fresh delights were nigh at hand,  
 that moved my mind still more and more.

More marvels arose to daunt my soul:  
I saw beyond that gladsome mere  
a crystal cliff that shone full bright —  
Many a noble ray gleamed forth; —  
at the foot thereof there sat a child,  
a gracious maiden, so debonair;  
robed was she in glistening white —  
I knew her well, I had seen her ere.  
    Radiant as refinèd gold  
    shone that glory 'neath the cliff;  
    long I gazed upon her there —  
    the longer, I knew her more and more. . . .

More than my longing was now my dread;  
I stood full still; I durst not call;  
with open eyes and fast-closed mouth,  
I stood as a well-trained hawk in a hall;  
twixt hope that it came for my soul's behoof,  
and fear lest perchance it might so befall,  
that the prize I chose might escape from me,  
ere I held it within my grasp;  
    when lo! that spotless creature of grace,  
    so gentle, so small, so winsomely lithe,  
    riseth up in her royal array —  
    a precious thing with pearls bedight.

Favored mortal might there see  
choicest pearls of sovereign price,  
when all as fresh as a fleur-de-lys  
    she came adown that bank.  
Gleaming white was her tunic rich;  
at its sides 'twas open, and wondrously stitched  
with the winsomest pearls, I trow full well,  
    that e'er mine eyes had seen:  
    broad were the sleeves, I ween and wot,  
    with double braid of pearls bedecked,  
    and her bright kirtle followed suit,  
    with precious pearls bedight.

A crown that maiden wore withal,  
bedecked with pearls, with none other stones,  
and pinnacled high with pure white pearls,  
with figured flowers wrought thereon;

no other gem was on her head;  
 her hair, too, hung about her neck;  
 her look was grave, as a duke's or an earl's;  
 whiter than whalebone was her hue.

Her locks shone then as bright pure gold;  
 loose on her shoulders so softly they lay;  
 though deep their color, they needed not  
 those precious pearls on her robe bedight.

"O Pearl!" quoth I, "with pearls bedight,  
 art thou my Pearl? — of me so lone  
 regretted, and through the night bewailed.  
 Much longing for thee have I borne concealed,  
 since thou glancedst from me into grass;  
 pensive, shattered, forlorn, am I,  
 but thou hast reached a life of joy  
 in the strifeless home of Paradise.

What chance hath hither brought my jewel,  
 and me in dolorous plight hath cast?

Since we twain were sundered and set apart,  
 have I been joyless, so loved I my jewel."

That jewel then, so fair begemmed,  
 veered up her visage, raised her gray eyes,  
 set on her crown of orient pearls,

and gently thus she spake: —

"Sir, thou hast misread thy tale,  
 to say thy pearl is all perdu,  
 that is in a casket so well bestowed,  
 yea, in this garden of grace and joy,  
 herein forever to dwell and play,  
 where sin nor mourning come ne'er nigh:  
 this were thy treasure-hold in sooth,  
 didst thou love thy jewel aright."

Translated by Sir Israel Gollancz

## JOHN GOWER

SINCE Caxton, the first printer of 'Confessio Amantis' [The Confession of a Lover], described Gower as a "squyer borne in Walys in the tyme of Kyng Richard the second," there has been a diversity of opinion about his birthplace, and he has been classed variously with prosperous

Gowers until of late, when the county assigned to him is Kent. His birth-year is placed approximately at 1330. We know nothing of his early life and education. It has been guessed that he went to Oxford, and afterwards traveled in the troubled kingdom of France. Such a course might have been followed by a man of his estate. He had means, for English property records (in this instance the Rolls of Chancery, the parchment foundation of English society) still preserve deeds of his holdings in Kent and Essex and elsewhere.

His life lay along with that of Chaucer's, in the time when Edward III and his son the Black Prince were carrying war into France, and the English Parliament were taking pay in plain speaking for what they granted in supplies, and wresting at the same time promises of reform from the royal hand. But Gower and Chaucer were not only contemporaries: they were of like pursuit, tastes, and residence; they were friends; and when Chaucer under Richard II, the grandson and successor of Edward, went to France upon the mission of which Froissart speaks, he named John Gower as one of his two attorneys while he should be away. Notice of Gower's marriage to Agnes Groundolf late in life — in 1398 — is still preserved. Three years after this he became blind — it was the year 1400, in which Chaucer died — and in 1408 he died.

The three works which pillow the head of the effigy at St. Saviour's, Southwark, indicate Gower's '*Speculum Meditantis*' [The Looking-Glass of One Meditating], which the poet wrote in French; the '*Vox Clamantis*' [The Voice of One Crying], in Latin; and the '*Confessio Amantis*,' in English. In addition to these there are in French two series of ballades, one, sometimes called the '*Traité*,' dealing with marriage, and the other, the '*Cinkante Balades*,' dealing with love. There is also a Latin '*Cronica Tripartita*' in hexameters describing the reign of Richard II, shorter Latin pieces on political themes, and a poem '*In Praise of Peace*,' addressed to Henry IV. The '*Speculum Meditantis*' was first discovered in 1895, the French title being '*Mirour de l'Homme*.' About thirty thousand lines of twelve-line stanzas treat of the Seven Deadly Sins and the corresponding Virtues, the whole forming an allegory of the human soul. The poem closes with an account of the life of the Virgin, who is extolled as the true mediator between sinful man and God. The '*Vox Clamantis*' is the voice of the poet, singing in Latin elegiacs of the terrible evils which led to the rise of the commons and their march to London under Wat Tyler and Jack Straw in 1381. It is doubtless a true picture of the excesses and miseries of the day. The remedy, the poet says, is in reform — right living and love of England. Simony in the prelates, avarice and drunkenness in the libidinous priests, wealth and luxury in the mendicant orders, miscarrying of justice in the courts, enrichment of individuals by excessive taxes — these are the subjects of the voice crying in the wilderness.

Gower's greatest work, however, is the '*Confessio Amantis*.' In form it is a dialogue between a lover and his confessor, who is a priest of Venus. In

substance it is a setting-forth, with moralizings which are at times touching and elevated, of one hundred and twelve different stories, from sources so different as the Bible, Ovid, Josephus, the 'Gesta Romanorum,' Valerius Maximus, Statius, Boccaccio, etc. Thirty thousand eight-syllabled rhymed lines make up the work. There are different versions. The first was dedicated to Richard II, and the second to his successor, Henry of Lancaster. In speaking of his minor works, which include the French ballades, and the English and Latin short poems, Todd says, "They have real and intrinsic merit: they are tender, pathetic, and poetical, and place our old poet Gower in a more advantageous point of view than that in which he has heretofore been usually seen."

### PETRONELLA

From the 'Confessio Amantis'

**A** KING whilom was yonge and wise,  
 The which set of his wit great prise.  
 Of depe ymaginations  
 And straunge interpretations,  
 Problemes and demaundès eke  
 His wisdom was to finde and seke;  
 Whereof he wolde in sondry wise  
 Opposen hem that weren wise.  
 But none of hem it mightè bere  
 Upon his word to yive answe're;<sup>1</sup>  
 Out taken one, which was a knight:  
 To him was every thing so light,  
 That also sone as he hem herde  
 The kingès wordès he answerde,  
 What thing the king him axè wolde,  
 Whereof anon the trouth he tolde.  
 The king somdele had an envie,  
 And thought he wolde his wittès plie  
 To setè some conclusion,  
 Which shuldè be confusion  
 Unto this knight, so that the name  
 And of wisdom the highè fame  
 Towárd him selfe he woldè winne.  
 And thus of all his wit withinne  
 This king began to studie and muse  
 What straungè matèr he might use

<sup>1</sup> No one could solve his puzzles.

The knightès wittès to confounde;  
 And atè last he hath it founde,  
 And for the knight anon he sente,  
 That he shall tellè what he mente.  
 Upon three points stood the matère,  
 Of quèstions as thou shalt here.

The firstè point of allè thre  
 Was this: what thing in his degre  
 Of all this world hath nedè lest,  
 And yet men helpe it allthermost.<sup>2</sup>

The second is: what moste is worth  
 And of costàge is lest put forth.

The thrid is: which is of most cost,  
 And lest is worth, and goth to lost.

The king these thre demaundès axeth.  
 To the knight this law he taxeth:  
 That he shall gone, and comen ayein  
 The thriddè weke, and tell him plein  
 To every point, what it amounteth.  
 And if so be that he miscounteth  
 To make in his answère a faile,  
 There shall none other thinge availe,  
 The king saith, but he shall be ded  
 And lese<sup>3</sup> his goodès and his hed.  
 This knight was sory of this thing,  
 And wolde excuse him to the king;  
 But he ne wolde him nought forbere,  
 And thus the knight of his answère  
 Goth home to take avisement.

But after his entendement  
 The more he cast his wit about,  
 The more he stant thereof in doute.  
 Tho<sup>4</sup> wist he well the kingès herte,  
 That he the deth ne shulde asterte,<sup>5</sup>  
 And suche a sorroe to him hath take  
 That gladship he hath all forsake.  
 He thoughtè first upon his life,  
 And after that upon his wife,  
 Upon his children eke also,  
 Of whichè he had doughteres two.  
 The yongest of hem had of age

<sup>2</sup> Most of all.

<sup>3</sup> Lose.

<sup>4</sup> Then.

<sup>5</sup> Escape.

Fourtene yere, and of visage  
 She was right faire, and of stature  
 Lich to an hevenlich figure,  
 And of manér and goodly speche,  
 Though men wolde all landès seche,<sup>6</sup>  
 They shulden nought have founde her like.  
 She sigh <sup>7</sup> her fader sorroe and sike,<sup>8</sup>  
 And wistè nought the causè why.  
 So cam she to him prively,  
 And that was wher he made his mone  
 Within a gardin all him one.<sup>9</sup>  
 Upon her knees she gan down falle  
 With humble herte, and to him calle  
 And saidè: — "O good fader dere,  
 Why makè ye thus hevychere,<sup>10</sup>  
 And I wot nothing how it is?  
 And well ye knowè, fader, this  
 What áventurè that you felle  
 Ye might it sauflly to me telle;  
 For I have oftè herd you said,  
 That ye such truste have on me laid,  
 That to my suster ne to my brother  
 In all this worlde ne to none other  
 Ye durstè telle a privete  
 So well, my fader, as to me.  
 Forthy,<sup>11</sup> my fader, I you praie  
 Ne casteth nought that hert <sup>12</sup> awaie,  
 For I am she that woldè kepe  
 Your honour." And with that to wepe  
 Her eye may nought be forbore;<sup>13</sup>  
 She wisheth for to ben unbore,<sup>14</sup>  
 Er that her fader so mistriste  
 To tellen her of that he wiste.  
 And ever among mercy <sup>15</sup> she cride,  
 That he ne shulde his counseil hide  
 From her, that so wolde him good  
 And was so nigh his flesh and blood.  
 So that with weping, atè laste  
 His chere upon his childe he caste,

<sup>6</sup> Seek.<sup>7</sup> Saw.<sup>8</sup> Sigh.<sup>9</sup> Alone.<sup>10</sup> Face, looks.<sup>11</sup> Therefore.<sup>12</sup> Heart.<sup>13</sup> Spared, prevented.<sup>14</sup> Unborn.<sup>15</sup> She continually besought.

And sorroefully to that she praide <sup>16</sup>  
 He tolde his tale, and thus he saide: —  
 "The sorroe, doughter, which I make  
 Is nought all only for my sake,  
 But for thee bothe and for you alle.  
 For such a chaunce is me befallè,  
 That I shall er this thriddè day  
 Lese all that ever I lesè <sup>17</sup> may,  
 My life and all my good therto.  
 Therefore it is I sorroe so."

"What is the cause, alas," quod she,  
 "My fader, that ye shulden be  
 Dede and destrued in such a wise?"

And he began the points devise,  
 Which as the king tolde him by mouthe,  
 And said her plainly, that he couthe  
 Answeren to no point of this.  
 And she, that hereth how it is,  
 Her counsel yaf <sup>18</sup> and saide tho: <sup>19</sup>

"My fader, sithen it is so,  
 That ye can se none other weie,  
 But that ye mustè nedès deie,  
 I wolde pray you of o <sup>20</sup> thing —  
 Let me go with you to the king,  
 And ye shall make him understonde,  
 How ye, my wittès for to fonde, <sup>21</sup>  
 Have laid your answer upon me,  
 And telleth him in such degre  
 Upon my word ye wol abide  
 To life or deth, what so betide.  
 For yet perchaunce I may purchase  
 With some good word the kingès grace,  
 Your life and eke your good to save.  
 For oftè shall a woman have  
 Thing, whiche a man may nought areche." <sup>22</sup>

The fader herd his daughters speche,  
 And thought that there was reson in,  
 And sigh his owne life to winne  
 He couthè done himself no cure. <sup>23</sup>  
 So better him thought in àventure

<sup>16</sup> In answer to her prayer.

<sup>17</sup> Lose.

<sup>18</sup> Gave.

<sup>19</sup> Then.

<sup>20</sup> One.

<sup>21</sup> Make trial of.

<sup>22</sup> Attain to.

<sup>23</sup> Saw that he could do nothing to save his own life.

To put his life and all his good,  
 Than in the manner as it stood,  
 His life in certein for to lese.  
 And thus thenkend he gan to chese <sup>24</sup>  
 To do the counseil of this maid,  
 And toke the purpose which she said.  
 The day was comen, and forth they gon;  
 Unto the court they come anon,  
 Where as the kinge in his jugement  
 Was set and hath this knight assent. <sup>25</sup>  
 Arraièd in her bestè wise,  
 This maiden with her wordès wise  
 Her fader leddè by the honde  
 Into the place, where he fonde  
 The king with other which he wolde;  
 And to the king knelend he tolde  
 As he enformèd was to-fore,  
 And praith the king, that he therfore  
 His doughters wordès woldè take;  
 And saith, that he woll undertake  
 Upon her wordès for to stonde.  
 Tho was ther great merveile on honde,  
 That he, which was so wise a knight,  
 His life upon so yonge a wight  
 Besettè wolde in jeopartie,  
 And many it helden for folie.  
 But at the lastè, netheles,  
 The king commaundeth ben in pees,  
 And to this maide he cast his chere, <sup>26</sup>  
 And saide he wolde her talè here,  
 And bad her speke; and she began: —  
 "My legè lord, so as I can,"  
 Quod she, "the pointès which I herde,  
 They shull of reson ben answerde.  
 The first I understonde is this:  
 What thinge of all the worlde it is,  
 Which men most helpe and hath lest nede.  
 My legè lord, this wolde I rede:  
 The erthe it is, which evermo  
 With mannès labour is bego  
 As well in winter as in May.  
 The mannès hond doth what he may

<sup>24</sup> Choose.<sup>25</sup> Sent for.<sup>26</sup> Turned his attention.

To helpe it forth and make it riche,  
 And forthy men it delve and diche,  
 And even it with strength of plough,  
 Wher it hath of him self inough  
 So that his nede is atè leste.  
 For every man and bird and beste  
 Of flour and gras and roote and rinde  
 And every thing by way of kinde  
 Shall sterve,<sup>27</sup> and erthe it shall become  
 As it was out of erthè nome,<sup>28</sup>  
 It shall to th' erthe torne ayein.  
 And thus I may by reson sein  
 That erthè is the most nedeles  
 And most men helpe it netheles;  
 So that, my lord, touchend of this  
 I have answerde how that it is.

That other point I understood,  
 Which most is worth, and most is good,  
 And costeth lest a man to kepe:  
 My lorde, if ye woll takè kepe,<sup>29</sup>  
 I say it is humilitè,  
 Through which the highè Trinitè  
 As for desert of purè love  
 Unto Mariè from above,  
 Of that he knewe her humble entente,  
 His ownè Sone adown he sente  
 Above all other, and her he ches<sup>30</sup>  
 For that vertu, which bodeth pees.  
 So that I may by reson calle  
 Humilitè most worthe of alle,  
 And lest it costeth to maintene  
 In all the worlde, as it is sene.  
 For who that hath humblesse on honde,  
 He bringeth no werres into londe,  
 For he desireth for the best  
 To setten every man in reste.  
 Thus with your highè reverence  
 Me thenketh that this evidence  
 As to this point is suffisaunt.

And touchend of the remenaunt,  
 Which is the thridde of your axinges,  
 What lest is worth of allè thinges,

<sup>27</sup> Die.<sup>28</sup> Taken.<sup>29</sup> Heed.<sup>30</sup> Chose.

And costeth most, I telle it, pride;  
 Which may nought in the heven abide,  
 For Lucifer with hem that felle  
 Bar pridè with him into helle.  
 There was pride of to grete cost  
 Whan he for pride hath heven lost;  
 And after that in Paradise  
 Adam for pridè lost his prise  
 In middel-erth. And eke also  
 Pride is the cause of allè wo,  
 That all the world ne may suffice  
 To staunche of pridè the reprise.  
 Pride is the heved <sup>31</sup> of all sinne,  
 Which wasteth all and may nought winne;  
 Pride is of every mis <sup>32</sup> the pricke; <sup>33</sup>  
 Pride is the worstè of all wicke, <sup>34</sup>  
 And costeth most and lest is worth  
 In placè where he hath his forth. <sup>35</sup>

Thus have I said that I woll say  
 Of min answére, and to you pray,  
 My legè lorde, of your office,  
 That ye such grace and such justice  
 Ordeignè for my fader here,  
 That after this, whan men it here,  
 The world therof may spechè good."

The king, which reson understood,  
 And hath all herde how she hath said,  
 Was inly glad, and so well paid,  
 That all his wrath is over go.  
 And he began to lokè tho  
 Upon this maiden in the face,  
 In which he found so mochel grace,  
 That all his prise on her he laide  
 In audience, and thus he saide: —

"My fairè maidè, well thee be  
 Of thin answére, and eke of thee  
 Me liketh well, and as thou wilt,  
 Foryivè be thy faders gilt.  
 And if thou were of such lignage,  
 That thou to me were of parage,  
 And that thy fader were a pere,  
 As he is now a bachelere,

<sup>31</sup> Head.<sup>32</sup> Mischief.<sup>33</sup> Core.<sup>34</sup> Evil.<sup>35</sup> Course.

So siker <sup>36</sup> as I have a life,  
 Thou sholdest thannè be my wife.  
 But this I saiè netheles,  
 That I woll shapè thin encrese;  
 What worldès good that thou wolt crave  
 Axe of my yift, and thou shalt have."

And she the king with wordès wise,  
 Knelende, thanketh in this wise: —

"My legè lord, god mot you quite.<sup>37</sup>  
 My fader here hath but a lite  
 Of warison,<sup>38</sup> and that he wende  
 Had all be <sup>39</sup> lost, but now amende  
 He may well through you noble grace."

With that the king right, in his place  
 Anon forth in that freshè hete  
 An erldome, which than of eschete  
 Was latè falle into his honde,  
 Unto this knight with rent and londe  
 Hath yove, and with his chartre sesed,  
 And thus was all the noise appesed.  
 This maiden, which sat on her knees  
 To-fore the king, his charitees  
 Commendeth and saith overmore: —

"My legè lord, right now to-fore  
 Ye saide, and it is of record,  
 That if my fader were a lord  
 And pere unto these other grete,  
 Ye wolden for nought ellès lete <sup>40</sup>  
 That I ne sholdè be your wife.  
 And thus wot every worthy life  
 A kingès word mot nede be holde.  
 Forthy my lord, if that ye wolde  
 So great a charitè fulfille,  
 God wot it werè well my wille.  
 For he which was a bachelere,  
 My fader, is now made a pere;  
 So whan as ever that I cam,  
 An erlès doughter now I am."

This yongè king, which peisèd <sup>41</sup> all  
 Her beautè and her wit withall,

<sup>36</sup> Surely.

<sup>37</sup> May God requite you.

<sup>38</sup> Has but little property.

<sup>39</sup> Been.

<sup>40</sup> Omit.

<sup>41</sup> Poised — weighed.

As he, which was with lovè hent,<sup>42</sup>  
 Anone therto gaf his assent.  
 He might nought the maid asterte,<sup>43</sup>  
 That she nis lady of his herte.  
 So that he toke her to his wife  
 To holdè, while that he hath life.  
 And thus the king towárd his knight  
 Accordeth him, as it is right.  
 And over this good is to wite <sup>44</sup>  
 In the cronique as it is write,  
 This noble king, of whom I tolde,  
 Of Spainè by tho daiès olde  
 The kingdom had in governaunce,  
 And as the bok makth remembraunce,  
 Alphonsè was his propre name.  
 The knight also, if I shall name,  
 Danz <sup>45</sup> Petro hight, and as men telle,  
 His doughter wisè Petronelle  
 Was clepèd, which was full of grace.  
 And that was sene in thilkè place,  
 Where she her fader out of tene <sup>46</sup>  
 Hath brought and made her selfe a quene,  
 Of that she hath so well desclosed  
 The points whereof she was opposed.

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER

**E**NGLISH literature, in the strict sense of the word, dates its beginning from the latter half of the fourteenth century. Not but that an English literature had existed long previous to that period. Furthermore, it reckoned among its possessions works of value, and a few which in the opinion of some display genius. But though the name was the same, the thing was essentially different. A special course of study is required for any comprehension whatever of the productions of that earliest literature; and for the easy understanding of those written even but a half-century or so before the period indicated, a mastery of many peculiar syntactical constructions is demanded and an acquaintance with a vocabulary differing in a large number of words from that now in use.

But by the middle of the fourteenth century this state of things can hardly be said to exist any longer for us. Everything by that time had become ripe for the creation of a literature of a far higher type than had yet been pro-

<sup>42</sup> Seized.<sup>43</sup> Escape.<sup>44</sup> Know.<sup>45</sup> Lord.<sup>46</sup> Destruction.

duced. Furthermore, conditions prevailed which, though their results could not then be foreseen, were almost certain to render the literature thus created comparatively easy of comprehension to the modern reader. The Teutonic and Romanic elements that form the groundwork of our present vocabulary had at last become completely fused. Of the various dialects prevailing, the one spoken in the vicinity of the capital had gradually lifted itself up to a pre-eminence it was never afterwards to lose. In this parent of the present literary speech, writers found for the first time at their command a widely accepted and comparatively flexible instrument of expression. As a consequence, the literature then produced fixed definitely for all time the main lines upon which both the grammar and the vocabulary of the English speech were to develop. The result is that it now presents few difficulties for its full comprehension and appreciation that are not easily surmounted. The most effective deterrent to its wide study is one formidable only in appearance. This is the unfamiliar way in which its words are spelled; for orthography then sought to represent pronunciation, and had not in consequence crystallized into fixed forms with constant disregard of any special value to be attached to the signs by which sounds are denoted.

Of the creators of this literature — Wycliffe, Langland, Chaucer, and Gower — Chaucer was altogether the greatest as a man of letters. This is no mere opinion of the present time: there has never been a period since he flourished in which it has not been fully conceded. In his own day, his fame swept beyond the narrow limits of country and became known to the outside world. At home his reputation was firmly established, and seems to have been established early. All the references to him by his contemporaries and immediate successors bear witness to his universally recognized position as the greatest of English poets, though we are not left by him in doubt that he had even then met detractors. Still the general feeling of the men of his time is expressed by his disciple Occleve, who terms him

“The firste finder <sup>1</sup> of our fair language.”

Yet not a single incident of his life has come down to us from the men who admired his personality, who enrolled themselves as his disciples, and who celebrated his praises. With the exception of a few slight references to himself in his writings, all the knowledge we possess of the events of his career is due to the mention made of him in official documents of various kinds and of different degrees of importance. In these it is taken for granted that whenever Geoffrey Chaucer is spoken of, it is the poet who is meant, and not another person of the same name. The assumption almost approaches absolute certainty; it does not quite attain to it. From these documents we discover that Chaucer, besides being a poet, was also a man of affairs. He was a soldier, a

<sup>1</sup> Poet.

negotiator, a diplomatist. He was early employed in the personal service of the king. He held various positions in the civil service. It was a consequence that his name should appear frequently in the records. It is upon them, and the references to him in documents covering transactions in which he bore a part, that the story of his life, so far as it exists for us at all, has been mainly built. It was by them also that the series of fictitious events which for so long a time did duty as the biography of the poet had their impossibility as well as their absurdity exposed.

The exact date of Chaucer's birth we do not know. The most that can be said is that it must have been somewhere in the early years of the reign of Edward III (1327-77). The place of his birth was in all probability London. His father, John Chaucer, was a vintner of that city, and there is evidence to indicate that he was to some extent connected with the court. In a deed dated June 19, 1380, the poet released his right to his father's former house, which is described as being in Thames Street. The spot, however unsuitable for a dwelling-place now, was then in the very heart of urban life, and in that very neighborhood it is reasonable to suppose that Chaucer's earliest years were spent.

The first positive information we have, however, about the poet himself belongs to 1357. In that year we find him attached to the household of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the third son of Edward III. He is there in the service of the wife of that prince, but in what position we do not know. It may have been that of a page. He naturally was in attendance upon his mistress during her various journeyings; but most of her time was passed at her residence in Hatfield, Yorkshire. Chaucer next appears as having joined the army of Edward III in his last invasion of France. This expedition was undertaken in the autumn of 1359, and continued until the peace of Bretigny, concluded in May 1360. During this campaign he was captured somewhere and somehow — we have no knowledge of anything beyond the bare fact. It took place, however, before the first of March 1360; for on that date the records show that the King personally contributed sixteen pounds towards his ransom.

From this last-mentioned date Chaucer drops entirely out of our knowledge till June 1367, when he is mentioned as one of the valets of the King's chamber. In the document stating this fact he is granted a pension — the first of several he received — for services already rendered or to be rendered. It is a natural inference from the language employed, that during these years of which no record exists he was in some situation about the person of Edward III. After this time his name occurs with considerable frequency in the rolls, often in connection with duties to which he was assigned. His services were varied; in some instances certainly they were of importance. From 1370 to 1380 he was sent several times abroad to share in the conduct of negotiations. These missions led him to Flanders, to France, and to Italy. The subjects

were very diverse. One of the negotiations in which he was concerned was in reference to the selection of an English port for a Genoese commercial establishment; another was concerning the marriage of the young monarch of England with the daughter of the King of France. It is on his first journey to Italy of which we have any record — the mission of 1372-73 to Genoa and Florence — that everybody hopes and some succeeded in having an undoubting belief that Chaucer visited Petrarch at Padua, and there heard from him the story of Griselda, which the Clerk of Oxford in 'The Canterbury Tales' states that he learned from the Italian poet.

But Chaucer's activity was not confined to foreign missions or to diplomacy; he was as constantly employed in the civil service. In 1374 he was made controller of the great customs — that is, of wool, skins, and leather — of the port of London. In 1382 he received also the post in the same port of controller of the petty customs — that is, of wines, candles, and other articles. The regulations of the office required him to write the records with his own hand; and it is this to which Chaucer is supposed to refer in the statement he makes about his official duties in 'The House of Fame.' In that poem the messenger of Jupiter tells him that though he has done so much in the service of the God of Love, yet he has never received for it any compensation. He then goes on to add the following lines, which give a graphic picture of the poet and of his studious life: —

Wherfore, as I said ywis,<sup>2</sup>  
 Jupiter considereth this,  
 And also, beau sir, other things;  
 That is, that thou hast no tidings  
 Of Lovè folk, if they be glad,  
 Ne of nought ellès, that God made;  
 And nought only from far countree  
 That there no tiding cometh to thee,  
 But of the very neighèboûrs,  
 That dwellen almost at thy doors,  
 Thou hearest neither that nor this;  
 But when thy labor all done is,  
 And hast made all thy reckonings,  
 Instead of rest and newè things,  
 Thou goest home to thine house anon,  
 And also <sup>3</sup> dumb as any stone,  
 Thou sittest at another book,  
 Till fully dazèd is thy look.  
 And livest thus as an eremite,  
 Although thine abstinence is lyte.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Certainly.

<sup>3</sup> As.

<sup>4</sup> Little.

In 1386 Chaucer was elected to Parliament as knight of the shire for the county of Kent. In that same year he lost or gave up both his positions in the customs. The cause we do not know. It may have been due to mismanagement on his own part; it is far more likely that he fell a victim to one of the fierce factional disputes that were going on during the minority of Richard II. At any rate, from this time he again disappears for two years from our knowledge. But in 1389 he is mentioned as having been appointed clerk of the king's works at Westminster and various other places; in 1390 clerk of the works for St. George's chapel at Windsor. Both of these places he held until the middle of 1391. In that last year he was made one of the commissioners to repair the roadway along the Thames, and at about the same time was appointed forester of North Petherton Park in Somerset, a post which he held till his death. After 1386 he seems at times to have been in pecuniary difficulties. To what cause they were owing, or how severe they were, it is the emptiest of speculations to form any conjectures in the obscurity that envelops this portion of his life. Whatever may have been his situation, on the accession of Henry IV, in September 1399, his fortunes revived. The father of that monarch was John of Gaunt, the fourth son of Edward III. That nobleman had pretty certainly been from the outset the patron of Chaucer; it is possible — as the evidence fails on one side, it cannot be regarded as proved — that by his marriage with Katharine Swynford he became the poet's brother-in-law. Whatever may have been the relationship, if any at all, it is a fact that one of the very first things the new king did was to confer upon Chaucer an additional pension. But the poet did not live long to enjoy the favor of the monarch. On the 24th of December 1399, he leased for fifty-three years or during the term of his life a tenement in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel, Westminster. But after the 5th of June 1400, his name appears no longer on any rolls. There is accordingly no reason to question the accuracy of the inscription on his tombstone which represents him as having died October 25, 1400. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. He was the first, and still remains perhaps the greatest, of the English poets whose bones have there found their last resting-place.

From Chaucer the man, and the man of affairs, we proceed now to the consideration of Chaucer the writer. He has left behind a body of verse consisting of more than thirty-two thousand lines, and a smaller but still far from inconsiderable quantity of prose. The latter consists mainly if not wholly of translations — one a version of that favorite work of the Middle Ages, the treatise of Boëthius on 'The Consolations of Philosophy'; another the tale of Melibeus in 'The Canterbury Tales,' which is taken directly from the French; thirdly, the Parson's Tale, derived probably from the same quarter; and fourthly, an unfinished treatise on the Astrolabe, undertaken for the instruction of his son Lewis. The prose of any literature always lags behind, and sometimes centuries behind, its poetry. It is therefore not surprising to

find Chaucer displaying in the former but little of the peculiar excellence which distinguishes his verse. In the latter but little room is found for hostile criticism. In the more than thirty thousand lines of which it is composed there occur of course inferior passages, and some positively weak; but taking it all in all, there is comparatively little in it, considered as a whole, which the lover of literature as literature finds it advisable or necessary to skip. In this respect the poet holds a peculiar position, which makes the task of representation difficult. As Southey remarked, Chaucer, with the exception of Shakespeare, is the most various of all English authors. He appeals to the most diversified tastes. He wrote love poems, religious poems, allegorical poems, occasional poems, tales of common life, tales of chivalry. His range is so wide that any limited selection from his works can at best give but an inadequate idea of the variety and extent of his powers.

The canon of Chaucer's writings has now been settled with a reasonable degree of certainty. In the prologue to 'The Legend of Good Women' he gave an idea of the work which up to that period he had accomplished. The God of Love, in the interview which is there described as having taken place, inveighs against the poet for having driven men away from the service due to his deity, by the character of what he had written. He says: —

Thou mayst it not deny:  
For in plain text, withouten need of glose,<sup>5</sup>  
Thou hast translated the Romance of the Rose,  
That is an heresy agains my law,  
And makest wisè folk fro me withdraw.  
And of Cressid thou hast said as thee list;  
That makest men to women lessè trist,<sup>6</sup>  
That be as true as ever was any steel.

Against this charge the queen Alcestis is represented as interposing to the god a defense of the poet, in which occurs the following account of Chaucer's writings: —

Albeit that he cannot well endite,  
Yet hath he makèd lewèd <sup>7</sup> folk delight  
To servè you, in praising of your name.  
He made the book that hight <sup>8</sup> the House of Fame,  
And eke the Death of Blanche the Duchess,  
And the Parliament of Fowlès, as I guess,  
And all the love of Palamon and Arcite  
Of Thebes, though the story is knowen lyte <sup>9</sup>;

<sup>5</sup> Commentary.

<sup>8</sup> Is called.

<sup>6</sup> Trust.

<sup>9</sup> Little.

<sup>7</sup> Ignorant.

And many an hymnè for your holy days  
 That highten <sup>10</sup> ballades, roundels, virelays;  
 And for to speak of other holiness,  
 He hath in prosè translatéd Boece,  
 And made the Life also of Saint Cecile;  
 He made also, gone sithen a great while, <sup>11</sup>  
 Origenes upon the Maudelain <sup>12</sup>:  
 Him oughtè now to have the lessè pain;  
 He hath made many a lay and many a thing.

This prologue is generally conceded to have been written between 1382 and 1385. Though it does not profess to furnish a complete list of Chaucer's writings, it can fairly be assumed that it included all which he then regarded as of importance either on account of their merit or their length. If so, the titles given above would embrace the productions of what may be called the first half of his literary career. In fact, his disciple Lydgate leads us to believe that 'Troilus and Cressida' was a comparatively early production, though it may have undergone and probably did undergo revision before assuming its present form. 'The Legend of Good Women' — in distinction from its prologue — would naturally occupy the time of the poet during the opening period of what is here termed the second half of his literary career. The prologue is the only portion of it, however, that is of distinctly high merit. The work was never completed, and Chaucer pretty certainly came soon to the conclusion that it was not worth completing. It was in the taste of the times; but it did not take him long to perceive that an extended work dealing exclusively with the sorrows of particular individuals was as untrue to art as it was to life. It fell under the ban of that criticism which in 'The Canterbury Tales' he puts into the mouth of the Knight, who interrupts the doleful recital of the tragical tales told by the Monk with these words: —

"Ho," quoth the knight, "good sir, no more of this:  
 That ye have said is right enow, ywis, <sup>13</sup>  
 And muchel <sup>14</sup> more; for little heaviness  
 Is right enow to muchel folk, I guess.  
 I say for me it is a great disease, <sup>15</sup>  
 Where-as men have been in great wealth and ease,  
 To hearken of hir sudden fall, alas!  
 And the contráry is joy and great solas, <sup>16</sup>  
 As when a man hath been in poor estate,  
 And climbeth up and waxeth fortunate,

<sup>10</sup> Are called.

<sup>11</sup> A great while ago.

<sup>12</sup> Origen upon Mary Magdalen.

<sup>13</sup> Certainly.

<sup>14</sup> Much.

<sup>15</sup> Discomfort.

<sup>16</sup> Solace.

And there abideth in prosperity.  
 Such thing is gladsome, as it thinketh <sup>17</sup> me,  
 And of such thing were goodly for to tell."

Accordingly, from the composition of pieces of the one-sided and unsatisfactory character of those contained in 'The Legend of Good Women,' Chaucer turned to the preparation of his great work, 'The Canterbury Tales.' This gave him the fullest opportunity to display all his powers, and must have constituted the main literary occupation of his later life.

It will be noticed that two of the works mentioned in the prologue to 'The Legend of Good Women' are translations, and are so avowed. One is of the 'Roman de la Rose,' and the other of the philosophical treatise of Boëthius. In regard to the version of the former which has come down, it is sufficient to say that there was not long ago a disposition to deny the genuineness of all of it. This now contents itself with denying the genuineness of part of it. The question cannot be considered here: it is enough to say that in the opinion of the present writer, while the subject is attended with certain difficulties, the evidence is strongly in favor of Chaucer's composition of the whole. But setting aside any discussion of this point, there can scarcely be any doubt that Chaucer began his career as a translator. At the period he flourished he could hardly have done otherwise. It was an almost inevitable method of procedure on the part of a man who found neither writers nor writings in his own tongue worthy of imitation, and who could not fail to be struck not merely by the excellence of the Latin classic poets but also by the superior culture of the Continent. In the course of his literary development he would naturally pass from direct translation to adaptation. To the latter practice he assuredly resorted often. He took the work of the foreign author as a basis, discarded what he did not need or care for, and added as little or as much as suited his own convenience. In this way the 5704 lines of the 'Filostrato' of Boccaccio became 8246 in the 'Troilus and Cressida' of Chaucer; but even of the 5704 of the Italian poet, 2974 were not used by the English poet at all, and the 2730 that were used underwent considerable compression. In a similar way he composed the 'Knight's Tale,' probably the most perfect narrative poem in our tongue. It was based upon the 'Teseide' of Boccaccio. But the latter has 9896 lines, while the former comprises but 2250; and of these 2250 fully two thirds are entirely independent of the Italian poem.

With such free treatment of his material, Chaucer's next step would be to direct composition, independent of any sources, save in that general way in which every author is under obligation to what has been previously produced. This finds its crowning achievement in 'The Canterbury Tales'; though several earlier pieces — such as 'The House of Fame,' 'The Parliament of Fowls,' and the prologue to 'The Legend of Good Women' — attest that

<sup>17</sup> Seems.

long before he had shown his ability to produce work essentially original. But though in his literary development Chaucer worked himself out of this exact reproduction of his models, through a partial working over of them till he finally attained complete independence, the habits of a translator clung to him to the very end. Even after he had fully justified his claim to being a great original poet, passages occur in his writings which are nothing but the reproduction of passages found in some foreign poem in Latin, or French, or Italian, the three languages with which he was conversant. His translation of them was due to the fact that they had struck his fancy, his insertion of them into his own work was to please others with what had previously pleased himself. Numerous passages of this kind have been pointed out; and doubtless there are others which remain to be pointed out.

The most important of what are sometimes called the minor works of Chaucer are 'The Parliament of Fowls,' 'The House of Fame,' 'Troilus and Cressida,' and 'The Legend of Good Women.' These are all favorable examples of his genius. But however good they may be in particular portions and in particular respects, in general excellence they yield place unquestionably to 'The Canterbury Tales.' It seems to have been very clearly the intention of the poet to embody in this crowning achievement of his literary life everything in the shape of a story he had already composed or was purposing to compose. Two of the pieces, the Love of Palamon and Arcite and the Life of St. Cecilia, as we know from the words of his already quoted, had appeared long before. The plan of the work itself was most happily conceived; and in spite of most painstaking efforts to find an original for it or suggestion of it somewhere else, there seems no sufficient reason for doubting that the poet himself was equal to the task of having devised it. No one certainly can question the felicity with which the framework for embodying the tales was constructed. All ranks and classes of society are brought together in the company of pilgrims who assemble at the Tabard Inn at Southwark to ride to the shrine of the saint at Canterbury. The military class is represented by the Knight, belonging to the highest order of the nobility, his son the Squire, and his retainer the Yeoman; the church by the Monk, the Friar, the Parson, the Prioress with her attendant Nun, and the three accompanying Priests, and less distinctly by the Scholar, the Clerk of Oxford, and by the Pardoner and the Summoner. For the other professions are the Doctor of Physic and the Sergeant of Law; for the middle-class landholders the Franklin; and for the various crafts and occupations the Haberdasher, the Carpenter, the Weaver, the Dyer, the Upholsterer, the Cook, the Ploughman, the Sailor, the Reeve, the Manciple, and (joining the party in the course of the pilgrimage) the assistant of the alchemist, who is called the Canon's Yeoman. Into the mouths of these various personages were to be put tales befitting their character and condition. Consequently there was ample space for stories of chivalry, of religion, of love, of magic, and in truth of every aspect of social life in

all its highest and lowest manifestations. Between the tales themselves were connecting links, in which the poet had the opportunity to give an account of the incidents that took place on the pilgrimage, the critical opinions expressed by the hearers of what had been told, and the disputes and quarrels that went on between the various members of the party. So far as this portion of his plan was finished, these connecting links furnish some of the most striking passages in the work. In one of them — the prologue to the *Wife of Bath's Tale* — the genius of the poet reaches along certain lines its highest development; while the general prologue describing the various personages of the party, though not containing the highest poetry of the work as poetry, is the most acute, discriminating, and brilliant picture of men and manners that can be found in our literature.

Such was the plan of the work. It was laid out on an extensive scale, perhaps on too extensive a scale ever to have been completed. Certain it is that it was very far from ever reaching even remotely that result. According to the scheme set forth in the prologue, the work when finished should have included over one hundred and twenty tales. It actually comprises but twenty-four. Even of these, two are incomplete: the *Cook's Tale*, which is little more than begun, and the romantic Eastern tale of the *Squire*, which, in Milton's words, is "left half told." To those that are finished, the connecting links have not been supplied in many cases. Accordingly the work exists not as a perfect whole, but in eight or nine fragmentary parts, each complete in itself, but lacking a close connection with the others, though all are bound together by the unity of a common central interest. The value of what has been done makes doubly keen the regret that so much has been left undone. Politics, religion, literature, manners, are all touched upon in this wide-embracing view, which still never misses what is really essential; and added to this is a skill of portrayal by which the actors, whether narrating the tales themselves, or themselves forming the heroes of the narration, fairly live and breathe before our eyes. Had the work been completed on the scale upon which it was begun, we should have had a picture of life and opinion in the fourteenth century more vivid and exact than has been drawn of any century before or since.

The selections given are partly of extracts and partly of complete pieces. To the former class belong the lines taken from the opening of 'The *Canterbury Tales*,' with the description of a few of the characters; and the account of the disappearance of the fairies at the opening of the *Wife of Bath's Tale*. The complete pieces are the tales of the *Pardoner*, and of the *Nun's Priest*. From the first, however, has been dropped the discourse on drunkenness, profanity, and gambling, which, though in keeping with the character of the narrator, has no connection with the development of the story. The second, the tale of the *Nun's Priest*, was modernized by Dryden under the title of 'The *Cock and the Fox*.' All of these are in heroic verse. The final selection is the ballade now usually entitled 'Truth.' In it the

peculiar ballade construction can be studied — that is, the formation in three stanzas, either with or without an envoy; the same rhymes running through the three stanzas; and the final line of each stanza precisely the same.

Chaucer's style, like that of all great early writers, is marked by perfect simplicity, and his language is therefore comparatively easy to understand. In the extracts here given the spelling has been modernized, save occasionally at the end of the line, when the rhyme has required the retention of an earlier form. The words themselves and grammatical forms have of course undergone no change. There are two marks used to indicate the pronunciation: first, the acute accent to indicate that a heavier stress than ordinary is to be placed on the syllable over which it stands; and secondly, the grave accent to indicate that the letter or syllable over which it appears, though silent in modern pronunciation, was then sounded. Thus *landès*, *grovès*, *friendès*, *knavès*, would have the final syllable sounded; and in a similar way *timè*, *Romè*, and others ending in *e*, when the next word begins with a vowel or *h* mute. The acute accent can be exemplified in words like *couráge*, *reasón*, *honoúr*, where the accent would show that the final syllable would either receive the main stress or a heavier stress than is now given it. Again, a word like *cre-a-ture* consists, in the pronunciation here given, of three syllables and not of two, and is accordingly represented by a grave accent over the *a* to signify that this vowel forms a separate syllable, and by the acute accent over the *ture* to indicate that this final syllable should receive more weight of pronunciation than usual. It accordingly appears as *créature*. In a similar way *con-dit-i-on* would be a word of four syllables, and its pronunciation would be indicated by this method *conditióñ*. It is never to be forgotten that Chaucer had no superior in the English tongue as a master of melody; and if a verse of his sounds inharmonious, it is either because the line is corrupt or because the reader has not succeeded in pronouncing it correctly.

The explanation of obsolete words or meanings is given in the foot-notes. In addition to these the following variations from modern English that occur constantly, and are therefore not defined, should be noted. *Hir* and *hem* stand for "their" and "them." The affix *y-* is frequently prefixed to the past participle, which itself sometimes omits the final *-en* or *-n*, as "ydrawe," "yshake." The imperative plural ends in *-th*, as "dreadeth." The general negative *ne* is sometimes to be defined by "not," sometimes by "nor"; and connected with forms of the verb "be" gives us *nis*, "is not"; *nas*, "was not." *As* is often an expletive, and cannot be rendered at all; *that* before "one" and "other" is usually the definite article; *there* is frequently to be rendered by "where"; *mo* always means "more"; *thilke* means "that" or "that same"; *del* is "deal" in the sense of "bit," "whit"; and the comparatives of "long" and "strong" are *lenger* and *strenger*. Finally it should be borne in mind that the double negative invariably strengthens the negation.

THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY

## PROLOGUE TO 'THE CANTERBURY TALES'

**W**HEN that Aprílè with his showers swoot <sup>1</sup>  
 The drought of March hath piercèd to the root,  
 And bathèd every vein in such liquour  
 Of which virtue engendered is the flower;  
 When Zephyrús eke with his sweetè breath  
 Inspirèd hath in every holt and heath  
 The tender croppès, and the youngè sun  
 Hath in the Ram his halfè course yrun,  
 And smallè fowlès maken melody,  
 That sleepen all the night with open eye —  
 So pricketh hem natúre in hir couráges <sup>2</sup>  
 Then longen folk to go on pilgrimáges,  
 And palmers for to seeken strangè strands,  
 To fernè hallows <sup>3</sup> couth <sup>4</sup> in sundry lands;  
 And specially, from every shirès end  
 Of Engèland, to Canterbury they wend,  
 The holy blissful martyr for to seek,  
 That hem hath holpen when that they were sick.  
 Befell that in that season on a day,  
 In Southwark at the Tabard <sup>5</sup> as I lay,  
 Ready to wenden on my pilgrimáge  
 To Canterbury with full devout couráge,  
 At night were come into that hostelry  
 Well nine and twenty in a company  
 Of sundry folk, by áventúre <sup>6</sup> yfalle  
 In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all,  
 That toward Canterbury woulden ride.  
 The chambers and the stables weren wide,  
 And well we weren easèd <sup>7</sup> at the best.  
 And shortly, when the sunnè was to rest,  
 So had I spoken with hem every one,  
 That I was of hir fellowship anon,  
 And madè forward <sup>8</sup> early for to rise  
 To take our way there-as I you devise.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sweet.<sup>2</sup> Hearts.<sup>3</sup> Distant saints.<sup>4</sup> Known.<sup>5</sup> Tabard: sign of an inn at Southwark.<sup>6</sup> Accident.<sup>7</sup> Accommodated.<sup>8</sup> Agreement.<sup>9</sup> Tell.

But nathèless, while I have time and space,  
 Ere that I further in this talè pace,  
 Me thinketh it accordant to reasón,  
 To tellen you all the conditióñ  
 Of each of hem, so as it seemèd me,  
 And which they weren, and of what degree,  
 And eke in what array that they were in:  
 And at a knight then will I first begin.

## THE KNIGHT

A knight there was, and that a worthy <sup>10</sup> man,  
 That <sup>11</sup> from the timè that he first began  
 To riden out, he <sup>12</sup> lovèd chivalry,  
 Truth and honoúr, freedom <sup>13</sup> and courtesy.  
 Full worthy was he in his Lordès war,  
 And thereto had he ridden, no man farre, <sup>14</sup>  
 As well in Christendom as in Heatheness,  
 And ever honoured for his worthiness.  
 At Alexandr' he was when it was won;  
 Full oftè time he had the board begun <sup>15</sup>  
 Aboven allè natióñs in Prusse;  
 In Lettowe <sup>16</sup> had he reyséd <sup>17</sup> and in Russe,  
 No Christian man so oft of his degree;  
 In Gernade <sup>18</sup> at the siegè had he be  
 Of Algezir, <sup>19</sup> and ridden in Belmarié. <sup>20</sup>  
 At Lieys <sup>21</sup> was he, and at Satalié, <sup>22</sup>  
 When they were won; and in the Greatè Sea <sup>23</sup>  
 At many a noble army <sup>24</sup> had he be.  
 At mortal battles had he been fifteen,  
 And foughten for our faith at Tramassene <sup>25</sup>  
 In listès thriès, and aye slain his foe.  
 This ilkè <sup>26</sup> worthy knight had been also  
 Sometimè with the lord of Palatié, <sup>27</sup>  
 Again another heathen in Turkéy:

<sup>10</sup> Of high rank.

<sup>11-12</sup> That — he = who.

<sup>13</sup> Liberality.

<sup>14</sup> Farther.

<sup>15</sup> Sat at the head of the table.

<sup>16</sup> Lithuania.

<sup>17</sup> Traveled.

<sup>18</sup> Granada.

<sup>19</sup> Algeciras.

<sup>20</sup> Moorish Kingdom of Africa.

<sup>21</sup> Lieys: in Armenia.

<sup>22</sup> Satalie: ancient Attalia.

<sup>23</sup> Mediterranean.

<sup>24</sup> Armed expedition.

<sup>25</sup> Tramassene: a kingdom in Africa.

<sup>26</sup> Same.

<sup>27</sup> Palatie: Palatine in Anatolia.

And evermore he had a sovereign pris.<sup>28</sup>  
 And though that he were worthy<sup>29</sup> he was wise,  
 And of his port as meek as is a maid.  
 He never yet no villainy<sup>30</sup> ne said  
 In all his life unto no manner wight.<sup>31</sup>  
 He was a very perfect gentle knight.  
 But for to tellen you of his array,  
 His horse were good, but he ne was not gay;<sup>32</sup>  
 Of fustián he wearèd a gipon,<sup>33</sup>  
 All besmutterèd<sup>34</sup> with his habergeón,<sup>35</sup>  
 For he was late ycome from his viáge,<sup>36</sup>  
 And wentè for to do his pilgrimáge.

## THE PRIORESS

There was also a Nun, a Prioress,  
 That of her smiling was full simple and coy;  
 Her greatest oath was but by Sáint Loy;  
 And she was clepèd<sup>37</sup> Madame Eglentine.  
 Full well she sang the servicè divine,  
 Entunéd<sup>38</sup> in her nose full seemèly;  
 And French she spake full fair and fetisly<sup>39</sup>  
 After the school of Stratford-at-the-Bow,  
 For French of Paris was to her unknowe.  
 At meatè well ytaught was she withal;  
 She let no morsel from her lippès fall,  
 Ne wet her fingers in her saucè deep.  
 Well could she carry a morsel, and well keep,  
 That no dropè ne fell upon her breast.  
 In courtesy was set full much her lest.<sup>40</sup>  
 Her over-lippè wipèd she so clean,  
 That in her cup there was no farthing<sup>41</sup> seen  
 Of greasè, when she drunken had her draught;  
 Full seemèly after her meat she raught:<sup>42</sup>  
 And sickerly<sup>43</sup> she was of great disport,  
 And full pleasánt and amiable of port,

<sup>28</sup> Estimation.<sup>29</sup> Of high rank.<sup>30</sup> Anything discourteous.<sup>31</sup> No sort of person.<sup>32</sup> Richly dressed.<sup>33</sup> Cassock.<sup>34</sup> Soiled.<sup>35</sup> Hauberk.<sup>36</sup> Journey.<sup>37</sup> Called.<sup>38</sup> Intoned.<sup>39</sup> Properly.<sup>40</sup> Pleasure.<sup>41</sup> Bit.<sup>42</sup> Reached.<sup>43</sup> Certainly.

And painèd <sup>44</sup> her to counterfeiten <sup>45</sup> cheer  
 Of court, and to be stately of manére,  
 And to be holden digne <sup>46</sup> of reveréce.  
 But for to speaken of her consciéce, <sup>47</sup>  
 She was so charitable and so pitoús,  
 She wouldè weep if that she saw a mouse  
 Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled;  
 Of smallè houndès had she, that she fed  
 With roasted flesh, or milk and wastel-bread; <sup>48</sup>  
 But sorè wept she if one of hem were dead, <sup>49</sup>  
 Or if men <sup>50</sup> smote it with a yardè <sup>51</sup> smarte: <sup>52</sup>  
 And all was consciéce and tender heart.  
 Full seemèly her wimple <sup>53</sup> pinchèd <sup>54</sup> was;  
 Her nosè tretys, her eyen gray as glass,  
 Her mouth full small and thereto soft and red;  
 But sickerly <sup>55</sup> she had a fair forehéad;  
 It was almost a spannè broad, I trow;  
 For hardily <sup>56</sup> she was not undergrowe. <sup>57</sup>  
 Full fetis <sup>58</sup> was her cloak, as I was ware.  
 Of small corál about her arm she bare  
 A pair <sup>59</sup> of beadès gauded all with green; <sup>60</sup>  
 And thereon hung a brooch of gold full sheen,  
 On which ther was first writ a crownèd A,  
 And after, *Amor vincit omnia*. [Love conquereth all things.]  
 Another Nunnè with her haddè she,  
 That was her chapèlain, <sup>61</sup> and Priestès three.

## THE FRIAR

A Frere there was, a wanton and a merry,  
 A limitour, <sup>62</sup> a full solemnè <sup>63</sup> man.  
 In all the orders four is none that can <sup>64</sup>  
 So much of dalliance and fair languáge.

<sup>44</sup> Took pains.<sup>45</sup> Imitate.<sup>46</sup> Worthy.<sup>47</sup> Tender-heartedness.<sup>48</sup> Bread of the finest flour.<sup>49</sup> Died.<sup>50</sup> One.<sup>51</sup> Staff.<sup>52</sup> Smartly.<sup>53</sup> Covering for the neck.<sup>54</sup> Plaited.<sup>55</sup> Certainly.<sup>56</sup> Certainly.<sup>57</sup> Undergrown.<sup>58</sup> Neat.<sup>59</sup> String.<sup>60</sup> Having the gaudies, or large beads, green.<sup>61</sup> Private secretary.<sup>62</sup> Licensed to beg within certain limits.<sup>63</sup> Festive.<sup>64</sup> Knows.

He haddé made full many a marriage  
 Of youngè women at his owen cost.  
 Unto his order he was a noble post;  
 Full well beloved and fámiliár was he  
 With franklins over-all <sup>65</sup> in his country,  
 And eke with worthy <sup>66</sup> women of the town:  
 For hè had powèr of confessiôn.  
 As saidè himself, more than a curáte,  
 For of his order he was licentiáte.  
 Full sweetèly heard he confessiôn,  
 And pleasant was his absolutiôn.  
 He was an easy man to give penáncé,  
 There-as he wist to have <sup>67</sup> a good pittáncé.  
 For unto a poor order for to give  
 Is signè that a man is well yshrive;  
 For if he gave, he durstè make avaunt, <sup>68</sup>  
 He wistè that a man was répentánt.  
 For many a man so hard is of his heart,  
 He may not weep although him sorè smart;  
 Therefore instead of weeping and prayèrs,  
 Men mote give silver to the poorè freres.  
 His tippet was aye farsèd <sup>69</sup> full of knives  
 And pinnès, for to given fairè wives;  
 And certainly he had a merry note:  
 Well could he sing and playen on a rote <sup>70</sup>  
 Of yeddings <sup>71</sup> he bare utterly the pris. <sup>72</sup>  
 His neckè white was as the fleur-de-lis.  
 Thereto he strong was as a champiôn.  
 He knew the taverns well in every town,  
 And every hostèlér <sup>73</sup> and tapèstér,  
 Bet than a lazár <sup>74</sup> or a beggestér; <sup>75</sup>  
 For unto such a worthy man as he  
 Accorded nought, as by his faculty,  
 To have with sickè lazars áacquaintáncé;  
 It is not honest, it may not advance  
 For to dealen with no such poraille, <sup>76</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Everywhere.

<sup>66</sup> Of high position.

<sup>67</sup> Where he knew he should have.

<sup>68</sup> Boast.

<sup>69</sup> Stuffed.

<sup>70</sup> A stringed instrument.

<sup>71</sup> Songs.

<sup>72</sup> Estimation.

<sup>73</sup> Innkeeper.

<sup>74</sup> Leper.

<sup>75</sup> Beggar.

<sup>76</sup> Poor people.

But all with rich and sellers <sup>77</sup> of vitaille.<sup>78</sup>  
 And o'er-all,<sup>79</sup> there-as profit should arise,  
 Courteous he was and lowly of service.  
 There nas no man nowhere so virtuous;<sup>80</sup>  
 He was the bestè beggar in his house:  
 [And gave a certain farmè <sup>81</sup> for the grant,  
 None of his brethren came there in his haunt.]  
 For though a widow haddè not a shoe,  
 So pleasant was his *In principio*,<sup>82</sup>  
 Yet would he have a farthing ere he went;  
 His purchase <sup>83</sup> was well better than his rent.<sup>84</sup>  
 And rage <sup>85</sup> he could as it were right a whelp:  
 In lovèdays <sup>86</sup> there could he muchel help;  
 For there he was not like a cloisterér  
 With a threadbare cope, as is a poor scholér;  
 But he was like a master or a pope.  
 Of double worsted was his semicope,<sup>87</sup>  
 That rounded as a bell out of the press.  
 Somewhat he lispèd for his wantonness,  
 To make his English sweet upon his tongue;  
 And in his harping, when that he had sung,  
 His eyen twinkled in his head aright,  
 As do the starrès in the frosty night.  
 This worthy limitour was cleped <sup>88</sup> Hubérd.

#### THE CLERK OF OXFORD

A Clerk there was of Oxenford <sup>89</sup> also,  
 That unto logic haddè long ygo.<sup>90</sup>  
 As leanè was his horse as is a rake,  
 And he was not right fat, I undertake,<sup>91</sup>  
 But lookèd hollow, and thereto soberly.  
 Full threadbare was his overest <sup>92</sup> courtepy,<sup>93</sup>  
 For he had geten <sup>94</sup> him yet no benefice,

<sup>77</sup> Givers.

<sup>78</sup> Victuals.

<sup>79</sup> Everywhere.

<sup>80</sup> Efficient.

<sup>81</sup> Rent.

<sup>82</sup> *In principio*: In the beginning — the friar's salutation.

<sup>83</sup> Illegitimate gains.

<sup>84</sup> Income.

<sup>85</sup> Toy wantonly.

<sup>86</sup> Days for settling differences.

<sup>87</sup> Short cape.

<sup>88</sup> Called.

<sup>89</sup> Oxford.

<sup>90</sup> Gone.

<sup>91</sup> Venture to say.

<sup>92</sup> Uppermost.

<sup>93</sup> Short cloak.

<sup>94</sup> Gotten.

Ne was so worldly for to have offíce.  
 For him was liefer <sup>95</sup> have at his bed's head  
 Twenty bookès clad in black or red,  
 Of Aristotle, and his philosophy,  
 Than robes rich, or fiddle, or gay psaltery.  
 But albe that he was a philosópher,  
 Yet haddè he but little gold in coffer,  
 But all that he might of his friendès hent,<sup>96</sup>  
 On bookès and his learning he it spent,  
 And busily <sup>97</sup> gan for the soulès pray  
 Of hem, that gave him wherewith to scolay;<sup>98</sup>  
 Of study took he most cure and most heed.  
 Not one word spake he morè than was need;  
 And that was said in form and reverence,  
 And short and quick, and full of high sentence.<sup>99</sup>  
 Sounding in moral virtue was his speech,  
 And gladly would he learn and gladly teach.

## THE LAWYER

A Sergeant of the Lawè ware and wise,  
 That often had ybeen at the Parvys,<sup>100</sup>  
 There was also, full rich of excellence.  
 Discreet he was and of great reverence;  
 He seemèd such, his wordès were so wise;  
 Justice he was full often in assize,  
 By patent and by plein <sup>101</sup> commissiún.  
 For his sciéce, and for his high renown,  
 Of fees and robès had he many one;  
 So great a purchaser <sup>102</sup> was nowhere none;  
 All was fee simple to him in effect,  
 His purchasíng mightè not be infect.<sup>103</sup>  
 Nowhere so busy a man as he there nas,  
 And yet he seemèd busier than he was.  
 In termès had he case and doomès <sup>104</sup> all,  
 That from the time of King Williám were fall.  
 Thereto he could indite, and make a thing,

<sup>95</sup> Rather.<sup>96</sup> Got.<sup>97</sup> Earnestly.<sup>98</sup> To attend school.<sup>99</sup> Matter.<sup>100</sup> Parvys: the portico of St. Paul's, frequented by lawyers for consultation.<sup>101</sup> Full.<sup>102</sup> Conveyancer.<sup>103</sup> Tainted by illegality.<sup>104</sup> Cases and decisions.

There couldè no wight pinch <sup>105</sup> at his wrítíng;  
 And every statute could <sup>106</sup> he plein <sup>107</sup> by rote.  
 He rode but homely in a medley <sup>108</sup> coat,  
 Girt with a ceint <sup>109</sup> of silk, with barrès smale; <sup>110</sup>  
 Of his array tell I no lenger tale.

## THE SHIPMAN

A shipman was there, woning <sup>111</sup> far by West:  
 For aught I wot, he was of Dartemouth.  
 He rode upon a rouncy, <sup>112</sup> as he couth, <sup>113</sup>  
 In a gown of falding <sup>114</sup> to the knee.  
 A dagger hanging on a lace had he  
 About his neck under his arm adown;  
 The hotè summer had made his hue all brown;  
 And certainly he was a good felláw.  
 Full many a draught of wine had he ydrawe  
 From Bourdeaux-ward, while that the chapman <sup>115</sup> sleep; <sup>116</sup>  
 Of nicè consciéce took he no keep. <sup>117</sup>  
 If that he fought, and had the higher hand,  
 By water he sent hem home to every land.  
 But of his craft to reckon well his tides,  
 His streamès and his dangers him besides,  
 His harbour and his moon, his lodemanáge, <sup>118</sup>  
 There was none such from Hullè to Cartháge.  
 Hardy he was, and wise to undertake;  
 With many a tempest had his beard been shake.  
 He knew well all the havens, as they were,  
 From Gothland to the Cape of Finisterre,  
 And every creek in Bretagne and in Spain:  
 His barge yclepèd was the Maudelaine.

<sup>105</sup> Find a flaw.<sup>106</sup> Knew.<sup>107</sup> Fully.<sup>108</sup> Mixed in color.<sup>109</sup> Girdle.<sup>110</sup> Small.<sup>111</sup> Dwelling.<sup>112</sup> Hack.<sup>113</sup> Could.<sup>114</sup> Coarse cloth.<sup>115</sup> Supercargo.<sup>116</sup> Slept.<sup>117</sup> Heed.<sup>118</sup> Pilotage.

## THE PASSING OF THE FAIRIES

From the Wife of Bath's Tale

**I**N th' oldè dayès of the king Arthúr  
 Of which that Britons spoken great honóur,  
 All was this land fulfilled of faèrie;  
 The Elf-queen, with her jolly company,  
 Dancèd full oft in many a greenè mead;  
 This was the old opinion as I read:  
 I speak of many hundred years ago;  
 But now can no man see none elvès mo,  
 For now the greatè charity and prayèrs  
 Of limitours <sup>1</sup> and other holy freres,  
 That searchen every land and every stream,  
 As thick as motès in the sunnè-beam,  
 Blessing hallès, chambers, kitchenès, bowers,  
 Cities, boroughs, castles, highè towers,  
 Thorpès, barnès, shepens,<sup>2</sup> dairies,  
 This maketh that there be no faèries:  
 For there as wont to walken was an elf,  
 There walketh now the limitour himself,  
 In undermelès <sup>3</sup> and in morwènings,  
 And saith his matins and his holy things,  
 As he goeth in his limitatión,<sup>4</sup>  
 Women may go now safely up and down,  
 In every bush, and under every tree;  
 There is none other incubus but he.

## THE PARDONER'S TALE

**I**N Flanders whilom was a company  
 Of youngè folk, that haunteden folly,  
 As riot, hazard, stewès, and tavérns;  
 Whereas with harpès, lutès, and gittérns <sup>1</sup>  
 They dance and play at dice both day and night  
 And eat also, and drinken o'er hir might;

<sup>1</sup> Begging friars.

<sup>2</sup> Stables.

<sup>3</sup> Afternoons.

<sup>4</sup> Begging district.

<sup>1</sup> Guitars.

Through which they do the devil sacrifice  
 Within the devil's temple, in cursed wise,  
 By superfluity abominable.  
 Hir oathès be so great and so damnáble,  
 That it is grisly for to hear hem swear.  
 Our blessèd Lordès body they to-tear;  
 Hem thoughte Jewès rent him not enough;  
 And each of hem at otherès sinnè lough.

And right anon then comen tombesteres  
 Fetis and small, and youngè fruitesteres,  
 Singers with harpès, bawdès, waferérs,  
 Which be the very devil's officérs,  
 To kindle and blow the fire of lechery,  
 That is annexèd unto gluttony.

These riotourès three, of which I tell,  
 Long erst ere primè rung of any bell,  
 Were set hem in a tavern for to drink:  
 And as they sat, they heard a bellè clink  
 Before a corpse, was carried to his grave:  
 That one of hem gan callen to his knave,  
 "Go bet," quoth he, "and askè readily,  
 What corpse is this, that passeth here forby:  
 And look that thou report his namè well."

"Sir," quoth this boy, "it needeth never a del;  
 It was me told ere ye came here two hours;  
 He was pardie an old fellów of yours,  
 And suddenly he was yslain to-night,  
 Fordrunk as he sat on his bench upright;  
 There came a privy thief, men clepeth Death,  
 That in this country all the people slayéth,  
 And with his spear he smote his heart atwo,  
 And went his way withouten wordès mo.  
 He hath a thousand slain this pestilénce:  
 And, master, ere ye come in his presénce,  
 Methinketh that it werè necessary,  
 For to be ware of such an adversary;  
 Be ready for to meet him evermore:  
 Thus taughtè me my dame; I say no more."

"By Saintè Mary," said this tavernér,  
 "The child saith sooth, for he hath slain this year  
 Hence over a mile, within a great villáge,

Both man and woman, child, and hine, and page;  
 I trow his habitatiòn be there:  
 To be avisèd <sup>2</sup> great wisdóm it were,  
 Ere that he did a man a dishonour."

"Yea, Godès armès," quoth this riotour,  
 "Is it such peril with him for to meet?  
 I shall him seek by way and eke by street,  
 I make avow to Godès digne <sup>3</sup> bonès.  
 Hearkeneth, fellówès, we three be all onès: <sup>4</sup>  
 Let each of us hold up his hand till other,  
 And each of us becomen otherès brother,  
 And we will slay this falsè traitor Death:  
 He shall be slain, which that so many slayeth,  
 By Godès dignity, ere it be night."

Together have these three hir truthès plight  
 To live and dien each of hem for other,  
 As though he were his own yborèn <sup>5</sup> brother.  
 And up they start all drunken, in this rage,  
 And forth they go towárdès that villáge,  
 Of which the taverner had spoke befor, <sup>6</sup>  
 And many a grisly <sup>6</sup> oath then have they sworn,  
 And Christès blessed body they to-rent; <sup>7</sup>  
 Death shall be dead, <sup>8</sup> if that they may him hent. <sup>9</sup>

When they have gone not fully half a mile,  
 Right as they would have trodden o'er a stile,  
 An old man and a pòrè with hem met.  
 This oldè man full meekèly hem gret, <sup>10</sup>  
 And saidè thus: "Now, lordès, God you see." <sup>11</sup>

The proudest of these riotourès three  
 Answered again: "What, carl, <sup>12</sup> with sorry grace,  
 Why art thou all forwrappèd <sup>13</sup> save thy face?  
 Why livest thou so long in so great age?"

This oldè man gan look on his viságe,  
 And saidè thus: "For I ne cannot find  
 A man, though that I walkèd into Ind,  
 Neither in city, nor in no villáge,  
 That wouldè change his youthè for mine age;

<sup>2</sup> Watchful.

<sup>3</sup> Worthy.

<sup>4</sup> At one.

<sup>5</sup> Born.

<sup>6</sup> Dreadful.

<sup>7</sup> Tear in pieces.

<sup>8</sup> Die.

<sup>9</sup> Seize.

<sup>10</sup> Greeted.

<sup>11</sup> Keep in sight, protect.

<sup>12</sup> Churl.

<sup>13</sup> Completely wrapped up.

And therefore mote I have mine agè still  
 As longè time as it is Godès will.  
 Ne death, alas! ne will not have my life;  
 Thus walk I like a restèless caitiff,  
 And on the ground, which is my mother's gate,  
 I knockè with my staff, both early and late,  
 And sayen, 'Liefè <sup>14</sup> mother, let me in.  
 Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin;  
 Alas! when shall my bonès be at rest?  
 Mother, with you would I changen my chest,  
 That in my chamber longè time hath be,  
 Yea, for an hairè clout to wrappè me.'  
 But yet to me she will not do that grace,  
 For which full pale and welkèd <sup>15</sup> is my face.

"But, sirs, to you it is no courtesy  
 To speaken to an old man villainy,  
 But <sup>16</sup> he trespass in word or else in deed.  
 In holy writ ye may yourself well read;  
 'Against <sup>17</sup> an old man, hoar upon his head,  
 Ye should arise': wherefore I give you rede,<sup>18</sup>  
 Ne do unto an old man none harm now,  
 No morè than ye would men did to you  
 In agè, if that ye so long abide.  
 And God be with you, where ye go or ride;  
 I mote go thither as I have to go."

"Nay, oldè churl, by God, thou shalt not so,"  
 Saidè this other hazardour anon;

"Thou partest not so lightly, by Saint John.  
 Thou spake right now of thilkè traitor Death,  
 That in this country all our friendès slayeth;  
 Have here my truth, as thou art his espy;  
 Tell where he is, or thou shalt it aby,<sup>19</sup>  
 By God and by the holy sacrament;  
 For soothly thou art one of his assent  
 To slay us youngè folk, thou falsè thief."

"Now, sirs," quoth he, "if that you be so lief <sup>20</sup>  
 To finden Death, turn up this crooked way,  
 For in that grove I left him, by my fay,  
 Under a tree, and there he will abide;

<sup>14</sup> Dear.

<sup>15</sup> Withered.

<sup>16</sup> Unless.

<sup>17</sup> To meet.

<sup>18</sup> Advice.

<sup>19</sup> Suffer for.

<sup>20</sup> Desirous.

Not for your boast he will him nothing hide.  
 See ye that oak? right there ye shall him find.  
 God savè you, that bought again mankind,  
 And you aniend! " thus said this oldè man.

And evereach <sup>21</sup> of these riotourès ran,  
 Till he came to that tree, and there they found  
 Of florins fine of gold ycoinèd round,  
 Well nigh an eightè bushels, as hem thought.  
 No lenger then after Death they sought,  
 But each of hem so glad was of that sight,  
 For that the florins be so fair and bright,  
 That down they set hem by this precious hoard.  
 The worst of hem he spake the firstè word.

"Brethren," quoth he, "take keepè <sup>22</sup> what I say;  
 My wit is great, though that I bourd <sup>23</sup> and play.  
 This treasure hath fortune unto us given  
 In mirth and jollity our life to liven,  
 And lightly as it cometh, so will we spend.  
 Hey! Godès precious dignity! who wend <sup>24</sup>  
 Today, that we should have so fair a grace?  
 But might this gold be carried from this place  
 Home to mine house, or ellès unto yours,  
 For well ye wot that all this gold is ours,  
 Then werè we in high felicity.  
 But trùely by day it may not be;  
 Men woulde say that we were thievès strong,  
 And for our owen treasure do us hong. <sup>25</sup>  
 This treasure must ycarried be by night  
 As wisely and as slily as it might.  
 Wherefore I rede, <sup>26</sup> that cut <sup>27</sup> among us all  
 Be draw, and let see where the cut will fall:  
 And he that hath the cut, with heartè blithe  
 Shall rennè <sup>28</sup> to the town, and that full swith, <sup>29</sup>  
 And bring us bread and wine full privily;  
 And two of us shall keepen subtly  
 This treasure well; and if he will not tarry,  
 When it is night, we will this treasure carry  
 By one assent, where as us thinketh best."

<sup>21</sup> Each one.

<sup>22</sup> Heed.

<sup>23</sup> Joke.

<sup>24</sup> Thought.

<sup>25</sup> Cause us to be hanged.

<sup>26</sup> Advise.

<sup>27</sup> Lot.

<sup>28</sup> Run.

<sup>29</sup> Quickly.

That one of hem the cut brought in his fist,  
 And bade hem draw and look where it will fall,  
 And it fell on the youngest of hem all:  
 And forth towàrd the town he went anon.  
 And also <sup>30</sup> soon as that he was agone,  
 That one of hem spake thus unto that other;  
 "Thou knowest well thou art my sworn brother;  
 Thy profit will I tellen thee anon.  
 Thou wost <sup>31</sup> well that our fellow is agone,  
 And here is gold, and that full great plenty,  
 That shall departed be among us three.  
 But nathèless, if I can shape it so,  
 That it departed were among us two,  
 Had I not done a friendès turn to thee? "

That other answered, "I not <sup>32</sup> how that may be:  
 He wot how that the gold is with us tway.<sup>33</sup>  
 What shall we do? what shall we to him say? "

"Shall it be counsel? " said the firstè shrew;  
 "And I shall tellen thee in wordès few  
 What we shall do, and bring it well about."

"I grantè," quoth that other, "out of doubt,  
 That by my truth I shall thee not bewray."

"Now," quoth the first, "thou wost well we be tway,  
 And two of us shall strengèr be than one.  
 Look, when that he is set, thou right anon  
 Arise, as though thou wouldest with him play;  
 And I shall rive him through the sidès tway,  
 While that thou strugglest with him as in game,  
 And with thy dagger look thou do the same;  
 And then shall all this gold departed be,  
 My dearè friend, betwixen me and thee:  
 Then may we both our lustès all fulfil,  
 And play at dice right at our owen will."  
 And thus accorded be these shrewes tway  
 To slay the third, as ye have heard me say.

This youngest, which that went unto the town,  
 Full oft in heart he rolleth up and down  
 The beauty of these florins new and bright.  
 "O Lord! " quoth he, "if so were that I might  
 Have all this treasure to myself alone,  
 There is no man that liveth under the throne

<sup>30</sup> As.

<sup>31</sup> Knowest.

<sup>32</sup> Know not.

<sup>33</sup> Two.

Of God, that shouldè live so merry as I.”  
 And the last the fiend, our enemy,  
 Put in his thought that he should poison bey,<sup>34</sup>  
 With which he mightè slay his fellows twaye.  
 Forwhy<sup>35</sup> the fiend found him in such living,  
 That he had leavè him to sorrow bring.  
 For this was utterly his full intent  
 To slay hem both, and never to repent.

And forth he goeth, no lenger would he tarry,  
 Into the town unto a 'pothecary,  
 And prayèd him that he him wouldè sell  
 Some poison, that he might his rattès quell,  
 And eke there was a polecat in his haw<sup>36</sup>  
 That, as he said, his capons had yslawe;<sup>37</sup>  
 And fain he wouldè wreak<sup>38</sup> him if he might,  
 On vermin, that destroyèd him by night.

The 'pothecary answered, “ And thou shalt have  
 A thing that, also<sup>39</sup> God my soulè save,  
 In all this world there nis no créature,  
 That eaten or drunk hath of this cónfecture,  
 Naught but the mountance<sup>40</sup> of a corn of wheat,  
 That he ne shall his life anon forlete;<sup>41</sup>  
 Yea, sterve<sup>42</sup> he shall, and that in lessè while,  
 Than thou wilt go a pace<sup>43</sup> not but a mile.  
 This poison is so strong and violent.”

This cursèd man hath in his hand yhent<sup>44</sup>  
 This poison in a box, and sith he ran  
 Into the nextè street unto a man,  
 And borrowed of him largè bottles three;  
 And in the two his poison pourèd he;  
 The third he kept clean for his owen drink,  
 For all the night he shope<sup>45</sup> him for to swink<sup>46</sup>  
 In carrying the gold out of that place.

And when this riotour, with sorry grace,  
 Had filled with wine his greatè bottles three,  
 To his fellows again repaireth he.

34 Buy.

35 Because.

36 Farm-yard.

37 Slain.

38 Revenge.

39 As.

40 Amount.

41 Give up.

42 Die.

43 At a footpace.

44 Seized.

45 Purposed.

46 Labor.

What needeth it to sermon of it more?  
 For right as they had cast his death before,  
 Right so they have him slain, and that anon.  
 And when that this was done, thus spake that one;  
 "Now let us sit and drink, and make us merry,  
 And afterward we will his body bury."  
 And with that word it happed him *par cas* <sup>47</sup>  
 To take the bottle there the poison was,  
 And drank, and gave his fellow drink also,  
 For which anon they storven <sup>48</sup> bothè two.  
 But certes I suppose that Avicen  
 Wrote never in no canon, n' in no fen, <sup>49</sup>  
 Mo wonder signès of empoisoning,  
 Than had these wretches two ere hir ending.  
 Thus ended be these homicidès two,  
 And eke the false empoisoner also.

### THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE

**A** POORÈ widow somedeal stope <sup>1</sup> in age,  
 Was whilom dwelling in a narrow cottàge,  
 Beside a grovè, standing in a dale.  
 This widow, of which I tellè you my tale,  
 Since thilkè day that she was last a wife,  
 In patiènce led a full simple life.  
 For little was her cattel <sup>2</sup> and her rent: <sup>3</sup>  
 By husbandry <sup>4</sup> of such as God her sent  
 She found <sup>5</sup> herself, and eke her daughtren two.  
 Three largè sowès had she, and no mo;  
 Three kine, and eke a sheep that hightè <sup>6</sup> Mall.  
 Full sooty was her bower, and eke her hall,  
 In which she ate full many a slender meal.  
 Of poignant sauce her needed never a deal. <sup>7</sup>

<sup>47</sup> By chance.

<sup>48</sup> Died.

<sup>49</sup> 'Fen'; the name of the sections of Avicenna's great work entitled 'Canon.'

<sup>1</sup> Advanced.

<sup>2</sup> Capital.

<sup>3</sup> Income.

<sup>4</sup> Economical management.

<sup>5</sup> Supported.

<sup>6</sup> Was called.

<sup>7</sup> Whit.

No dainty morsel passèd through her throat;  
 Her diet was accordant to her cote.<sup>8</sup>  
 Repletión ne made her never sick;  
 Attemper<sup>9</sup> diet was all her physíc,  
 And exercise, and heartès súffisáncē.<sup>10</sup>  
 The goutè let<sup>11</sup> her nothing for to dance,  
 N' apoplexy ne shentè<sup>12</sup> not her head.  
 No wine ne drank she, neither white ne red:  
 Her board was servèd most with white and black,  
 Milk and brown bread, in which she found no lack,  
 Seind<sup>13</sup> bacon, and sometime an egg or twey;  
 For she was as it were a manner dey.<sup>14</sup>

A yard she had, enclosed all about  
 With stickès, and a dryè ditch without,  
 In which she had a cock hight Chanticleer,  
 In all the land of crowing was none his peer.  
 His voice was merrier than the merry orgón,  
 On massè days that in the churchè gon.  
 Well sikerer<sup>15</sup> was his crowing in his lodge,  
 Than is a clock, or an abbéy horloge.<sup>16</sup>  
 By nature he knew each ascensión  
 Of the equinoctiál in thilkè town;  
 For when degrees fifteenè were ascended,  
 Then crew he, that it might not be amended.

His comb was redder than the fine corál,  
 And battled,<sup>17</sup> as it were a castle wall.  
 His bill was black, and as the jet it shone;  
 Like azure were his leggès and his ton;<sup>18</sup>  
 His nailès whiter than the lily flower,  
 And like the burnèd<sup>19</sup> gold was his colóur.

This gentle cock had in his governáncē  
 Seven hennès, for to do all his pleasáncē,  
 Which were his sisters and his paramours,  
 And wonder like to him, as of colóurs;  
 Of which the fairest huèd on her throat  
 Was clepèd fairè Damosel Partelote.  
 Courteous she was, discreet, and debonair,

<sup>8</sup> Cottage.

<sup>9</sup> Temperate.

<sup>10</sup> Content.

<sup>11</sup> Prevented.

<sup>12</sup> Injured.

<sup>13</sup> Singed, broiled.

<sup>14</sup> A sort of dairy-woman.

<sup>15</sup> Surer.

<sup>16</sup> Clock, horologe.

<sup>17</sup> Battlemented.

<sup>18</sup> Toes.

<sup>19</sup> Burnished.

And còmpanable,<sup>20</sup> and bare herself so fair,  
 Sin<sup>21</sup> thilkè day that she was sevennight old,  
 That truèly she hath the heart in hold<sup>22</sup>  
 Of Chanticleer, locken<sup>23</sup> in every lith;<sup>24</sup>  
 He loved her so, that well was him therewith.  
 But such a joy was it to hear hem sing,  
 When that the brightè sunnè gan to spring,  
 In sweet accord, "My lief is faren on land."<sup>25</sup>  
 For thilkè time, as I have understande,  
 Beastès and birdès couldè speak and sing.

And so befell, that in a dawèning,  
 As Chanticleer among his wivès all  
 Sat on his perchè, that was in the hall,  
 And next him sat this fairè Partèlote,  
 This Chanticleer gan groanen in his throat,  
 As man that in his dream is drecchèd<sup>26</sup> sore.  
 And when that Partèlote thus heard him roar,  
 She was aghast, and said, "O heartè dear,  
 What aileth you to groan in this mannère?  
 Ye be a very sleeper, fie, for shame!"

And he answèred and saidè thus: "Madáme,  
 I pray you that ye take it not agrief;<sup>27</sup>  
 By God, me met<sup>28</sup> I was in such mischiéf<sup>29</sup>  
 Right now, that yet mine heart is sore affright.  
 Now God," quoth he, "my sweven<sup>30</sup> read<sup>31</sup> aright,  
 And keep my body out of foul prisón.  
 Me met how that I roamèd up and down  
 Within our yard, where-as I saw a beast  
 Was like an hound, and would have made arrest  
 Upon my body, and have had me dead.  
 His colour was betwixè yellow and red;  
 And tippèd was his tail, and both his ears  
 With black, unlike the remnant of his hairs.  
 His snoutè was small, with glowing eyen twey;  
 Yet of his look for fear almost I dey:<sup>32</sup>  
 This causèd me my groaning doubtèless."

<sup>20</sup> Companionable.

<sup>21</sup> Since.

<sup>22</sup> Possession.

<sup>23</sup> Locked, inclosed.

<sup>24</sup> Limb.

<sup>25</sup> "My love is gone to the country."

<sup>26</sup> Oppressed.

<sup>27</sup> In offense.

<sup>28</sup> I dreamed.

<sup>29</sup> Misfortune.

<sup>30</sup> Dream.

<sup>31</sup> Interpret.

<sup>32</sup> Die.

"Avoy!" quoth she, "fie on you heartèless!  
 Alas!" quoth she, "for by that God above  
 Now have ye lost mine heart and all my love;  
 I cannot love a coward, by my faith.  
 For certes, what so any woman saith,  
 We all desíren, if it mightè be,  
 To have husbándès, hardy, wise, and free.  
 And secre,<sup>33</sup> and no niggard ne no fool,  
 Ne him that is aghast of every tool,  
 Ne none avantour<sup>34</sup> by that God above.  
 How durst ye say for shame unto your love,  
 That anything might maken you afeard?  
 Have ye no mannès heart, and have a beard?  
 Alas! and can ye be aghast of swevenès?<sup>35</sup>  
 Nothing but vanity, God wot, in sweven is.  
 Swevens engender of repletions,  
 And oft of fume, and of complexions,<sup>36</sup>  
 When humours be too abundant in a wight.  
 Certes this dream, which ye have met<sup>37</sup> tonight,  
 Cometh of the greatè superfluity  
 Of yourè redè colera,<sup>38</sup> pardié,  
 Which causeth folk to dreamen in hir dreams  
 Of arrows, and of fire with redè leames,<sup>39</sup>  
 Of greatè beastès, that they will hem bite,  
 Of kontek<sup>40</sup> and of whelpès great and lite;<sup>41</sup>  
 Right as the humour of melánccholy  
 Causeth full many a man in sleep to cry,  
 For fear of blackè beares or bullès blake,  
 Or ellès blackè devils will hem take.  
 Of other humours could I tell also,  
 That worken many a man in sleep full woe:  
 But I will pass as lightly<sup>42</sup> as I can.  
 Lo Cato, which that was so wise a man,  
 Said he not thus? 'Ne do no force<sup>43</sup> of dreams.'"  
 "Now, Sir," quoth she, "when ye fly from the beams,  
 For Godès love, as take some laxative:  
 Up<sup>44</sup> peril of my soul, and of my live,

33 Secret.

34 Boaster of female favor.

35 Dreams.

36 Temperaments.

37 Dreamed.

38 Bile.

39 Flames.

40 Contention.

41 Little.

42 Quickly.

43 Make no account.

44 Upon.

I counsel you the best, I will not lie,  
 That both of choler, and of meláncoly  
 Ye purgè you; and for ye shall not tarry,  
 Though in this town is none apothecary,  
 I shall myself to herbès teachen you,  
 That shall be for your heal <sup>45</sup> and for your prow; <sup>46</sup>  
 And in our yard tho <sup>47</sup> herbès shall I find,  
 The which have of hir property by kind <sup>48</sup>  
 To purgen you beneath, and eke above.  
 Forget not this for Godès owen love;  
 Ye be full cholerick of complexiòn;  
 Ware the sun in his ascensiòn  
 Ne find you not replete of humours hot:  
 And if it do, I dare well lay a groat,  
 That ye shall have a fever tertian,  
 Or an agúe, that may be yourè bane.  
 A day or two ye shall have digestives  
 Of wormès, ere ye take your laxatives,  
 Of lauriol, centaury, and fumetere, <sup>49</sup>  
 Or else of hellebore, that groweth there,  
 Of catapucè, <sup>50</sup> or of gaitres-berriès, <sup>51</sup>  
 Of herb ivy growing in our yard, that merry is:  
 Pick hem up right as they grow, and eat hem in.  
 Be merry, husband, for your father kin  
 Dreadeth no dream; I can say you no more."  
 "Madame," quoth he, " *grand mercy* of <sup>52</sup> your lore.  
 But nathèless, as touching Dan Caton,  
 That hath of wisdom such a great renown,  
 Though that he bade no dreamès for to drede,  
 By God, men may in oldè bookès read,  
 Of many a man, more of authority  
 Than ever Cato was, so mote I the, <sup>53</sup>  
 That all the rèveise say of this senténce,  
 And have well founden by experiénce,  
 That dreamès be significatións  
 As well of joy, as of tribulatións,  
 That folk endure in this life présent.  
 There needeth make of this none argument;  
 The very prevè <sup>54</sup> sheweth it indeed.

<sup>45</sup> Health.<sup>46</sup> Profit.<sup>47</sup> Those.<sup>48</sup> Nature.<sup>49</sup> Fumitory.<sup>50</sup> Spurge.<sup>51</sup> Dogwood berries.<sup>52</sup> Much obliged for.<sup>53</sup> Thrive.<sup>54</sup> Trial, experience.

" One of the greatest authors that men read,  
 Saith thus, that whilom two fellowès went  
 On pilgrimage in a full good intent;  
 And happèd so, they came into a town,  
 Where-as there was such congregatiòn  
 Of people, and eke so strait of herbergage,<sup>55</sup>  
 That they ne found as much as one cottàge,  
 In which they bothè might ylodgèd be:  
 Wherefore they musten of necessity,  
 As for that night, departen<sup>56</sup> company;  
 And each of hem goeth to his hostelry,  
 And took his lodging as it wouldè fall.  
 That one of hem was lodgèd in a stall,  
 Far in a yard, with oxen of the plow;  
 That other man was lodgèd well enow,  
 As was his áventúre, or his fortúne,  
 That us govérneth all, as in commúne.  
 And so befell, that, long ere it were day,  
 This man met<sup>57</sup> in his bed, there-as he lay,  
 How that his fellow gan upon him call,  
 And said, ' Alas! for in an oxès stall  
 This night I shall be murdered, there I lie.  
 Now help me, dearè brother, or I die;  
 In allè hastè come to me,' he said.  
 This man out of his sleep for fear abraid;<sup>58</sup>  
 But when that he was awakened of his sleep,  
 He turnèd him, and took of this no keep;<sup>59</sup>  
 Him thought his dreame nas but a vanity.  
 Thus twiès in his sleeping dreamèd he.  
 And at the thirde time yet his felláw  
 Came, as him thought, and said, ' I am now slawe.<sup>60</sup>  
 Behold my bloody woundès, deep and wide.  
 Arise up early, in the morrow tide,  
 And at the west gate of the town,' quoth he,  
 ' A cartè full of dung there shalt thou see,  
 In which my body is hid full privily.  
 Do thilkè cart arresten boldèly.  
 My gold causèd my murder, sooth to sayn.'  
 And told him every point how he was slain  
 With a full piteous facè, pale of hue.

<sup>55</sup> Limited in accommodation.

<sup>56</sup> Part.

<sup>57</sup> Dreamed.

<sup>58</sup> Awoke.

<sup>59</sup> Heed.

<sup>60</sup> Slain.

And trusteth well, his dream he found full true;  
 For on the morrow, as soon as it was day,  
 To his fellówès inn he took his way:  
 And when that he came to this oxès stall,  
 After his fellow he began to call.  
 The hostèler answérèd him anon,  
 And saidè, 'Sir, your fellow is agone,  
 As soon as day he went out of the town.'

"This man gan fallen in suspiciòn  
 Remembering on his dreamès that he met,<sup>61</sup>  
 And forth he goeth, no lenger would he let,<sup>62</sup>  
 Unto the west gate of the town, and found  
 A dung cart, as it were to dungè lond,  
 That was arrayèd in that samè wise  
 As ye have heard the deadè man devise:  
 And with an hardy heart he gan to cry,  
 'Vengeance and justice of this felony:  
 My fellow murdered is this samè night,  
 And in this cart he lieth, gaping upright.<sup>63</sup>  
 I cry out on the ministers,' quoth he,  
 'That shouldè keep and rulen this city:  
 Harow; alas! here lieth my fellow slain.'  
 What should I more unto this talè sayn?  
 The people out start,<sup>64</sup> and cast the cart to ground,  
 And in the middle of the dung they found  
 The deadè man, that murdered was all new.  
 O blissful God! that art so just and true,  
 Lo, how that thou bewrayest<sup>65</sup> murder alway.  
 Murder will out, that see we day by day.  
 Murder is so wlatson<sup>66</sup> and abominable  
 To God, that is so just and reasonáble,  
 That he ne will not suffer it helèd<sup>67</sup> be,  
 Though it abide a year, or two, or three;  
 Murder will out, this is my conclusiòn.

"And right anon, minísters of that town  
 Have hent<sup>68</sup> the carter, and so sore him pined,<sup>69</sup>  
 And eke the hostèler so sore engined,<sup>70</sup>  
 That they beknew<sup>71</sup> hir wickedness anon,  
 And were anhangèd by the neckè bone.

<sup>61</sup> Dreamed.

<sup>62</sup> Stay.

<sup>63</sup> Prone on his back.

<sup>64</sup> Started.

<sup>65</sup> Revealest.

<sup>66</sup> Loathsome.

<sup>67</sup> Hidden.

<sup>68</sup> Seized.

<sup>69</sup> Tortured.

<sup>70</sup> Racked.

<sup>71</sup> Confessed.

"Here may men see that dreamès be to dread.  
 And certes in the samè book I read,  
 Right in the nextè chapter after this,  
 (I gabbè <sup>72</sup> not, so have I joy and bliss,)  
 Two men that would have passèd over sea  
 For certain cause into a far country,  
 If that the wind ne haddè been contráry,  
 That made hem in a city for to tarry,  
 That stood full merry upon an haven side.  
 But on a day, again <sup>73</sup> the even tide,  
 The wind gan change, and blew right as hem lest.<sup>74</sup>  
 Jolly and glad they went unto hir rest,  
 And casten hem full early for to sail;  
 But to that one man fell a great marvail.  
 That one of them in sleeping as he lay,  
 He met <sup>75</sup> a wonder dream, again the day:  
 Him thought a man stood by his beddès side,  
 And him commanded that he should abide,  
 And said him thus: 'If thou tomorrow wend,  
 Thou shalt be dreynt <sup>76</sup>; my tale is at an end.'  
 He woke, and told his fellow what he met,<sup>75</sup>  
 And prayèd him his voyage to let <sup>77</sup>;  
 As for that day, he prayed him for to abide.  
 His fellow, that lay by his beddès side,  
 Gan for to laugh, and scornèd him full fast.  
 'No dream,' quoth he, 'may so my heart aghast,  
 That I will letten for to do my things.  
 I settè not a straw by thy dreamings,  
 For swevens <sup>78</sup> be but vanities and japes.<sup>79</sup>  
 Men dream all day of owlès or of apes,  
 And eke of many a masè <sup>80</sup> therewithal;  
 Men dream of thing that never was, ne shall.  
 But sith I see that thou wilt here abide,  
 And thus forslothen <sup>81</sup> wilfully thy tide,  
 God wot it rueth <sup>82</sup> me, and have good day.'  
 And thus he took his leave, and went his way.  
 But ere that he had half his course ysailed,  
 Noot <sup>83</sup> I not why, ne what mischance it ailed,

<sup>72</sup> Talk idly.<sup>73</sup> Toward.<sup>74</sup> Pleased.<sup>75</sup> Dreamed.<sup>76</sup> Drowned.<sup>77</sup> Stay.<sup>78</sup> Dreams.<sup>79</sup> Tricks.<sup>80</sup> Wild fancy.<sup>81</sup> Lose by sloth.<sup>82</sup> Moves my pity.<sup>83</sup> Know not.

But casually the shippès bottom rent,  
 And ship and man under the water went  
 In sight of other shippès there beside,  
 That with hem sailèd at the samè tide.

"And therefore, fairè Partèlote so dear,  
 By such ensamples old yet mayst thou lere,<sup>84</sup>  
 That no man shouldè be too reckèless  
 Of dreamès, for I say thee doubtèless,  
 That many a dream full sore is for to dread.

"Lo, in the life of Saint Kenelm I read,  
 That was Kenulphus son, the noble king  
 Of Mercenrike,<sup>85</sup> how Kenelm met <sup>86</sup> a thing.  
 A little ere he was murdered, on a day,  
 His murder in his ávisión <sup>87</sup> he say.<sup>88</sup>  
 His norice <sup>89</sup> him expounded every del  
 His sweven, and bade him for to keep him well  
 For <sup>90</sup> treason; but he nas but seven year old,  
 And therefore little talè hath he told <sup>91</sup>  
 Of any dream, so holy was his heart.  
 By God, I haddè liefer than my shirt,  
 That ye had read his legend, as have I.

"Dame Partèlote, I say you truèly,  
 Macrobius, that writ the ávisión <sup>92</sup>  
 In Afric of the worthy Scipion,  
 Affirmeth dreamès, and saith that they be  
 Warning of thingès that men after see.  
 And furthermore, I pray you looketh well  
 In the Oldè Testament, of Danièl,  
 If he held dreamès any vanity.  
 Read eke of Joseph, and there shall ye see  
 Where <sup>93</sup> dreamès be sometime (I say not all)  
 Warning of thingès that shall after fall.  
 Look of Egypt the king, Dan Pharao,  
 His baker and his butèler also,  
 Whether they ne felten none effect in dreams.  
 Whoso will seeken acts of sundry remes,<sup>94</sup>  
 May read of dreamès many a wonder thing.

<sup>84</sup> Learn.

<sup>85</sup> Mercia.

<sup>86</sup> Dreamed.

<sup>87</sup> Vision.

<sup>88</sup> Saw.

<sup>89</sup> Nurse.

<sup>90</sup> For fear of.

<sup>91</sup> Account hath he made.

<sup>92</sup> Vision.

<sup>93</sup> Whether.

<sup>94</sup> Realms.

Lo Cræsus, which that was of Lydia king,  
Met <sup>95</sup> he not that he sat upon a tree,  
Which signified he should anhangèd be?

"Lo here, Andromache, Hectórès wife,  
That day that Hector shouldè lese <sup>96</sup> his life,  
She dreamèd on the samè night beform,  
How that the life of Hector should be lorn, <sup>97</sup>  
If thilkè day he went into battail:  
She warnèd him, but it might not avail;  
He wentè for to fighten nathèless,  
And he was slain anon of Achillès.  
But thilké tale is all too long to tell,  
And eke it is nigh day, I may not dwell.

"Shortly I say, as for conclusiòn,  
That I shall have of this avisiòn  
Adversity: and I say furthermore,  
That I ne tell <sup>98</sup> of laxatives no store,  
For they be venomous, I wot it well:  
I hem defy, I love hem never a del.

"Now let us speak of mirth, and stint all this;  
Madamé Partèlote, so have I bliss,  
Of one thing God hath sent me largè grace:  
For when I see the beauty of your face,  
Ye be so scarlet red about your eyen,  
It maketh all my dreadè for to dien,  
For, also sicker as *In principio*,  
*Mulier est hominis confusio*, <sup>99</sup>  
Madam, the sentence <sup>100</sup> of this Latin is,  
Woman is mannès joy and all his bliss —  
For when I feel a-night your softè side,

I am so full of joy and of soláce,  
That I defyè bothè sweven <sup>101</sup> and dream."

And with that word he flew down from the beam,  
For it was day, and eke his hennès all;  
And with a chuck he gan hem for to call,  
For he had found a corn, lay in the yard.  
Royal he was, he was no more afeard;

<sup>95</sup> Dreamed.

<sup>96</sup> Lose.

<sup>97</sup> Lost.

<sup>98</sup> Set no store.

<sup>99</sup> As true as Gospel, woman is man's confusion.

<sup>100</sup> Meaning.

<sup>101</sup> Dream.

He looketh as it were a grim lión;  
 And on his toes he roameth up and down,  
 Him deigné not to set his feet to ground:  
 He chucketh, when he hath a corn yfound,  
 And to him rennen then his wivès all.  
 Thus royal, as a prince is in his hall,  
 Leave I this Chanticleer in his pastúre;  
 And after will I tell his áventúre.

When that the month in which the world began,  
 That hightè March, when God first makèd man,  
 Was cóplete, and ypassèd were also,  
 Sithen <sup>102</sup> March began, thirty dayès and two,  
 Befell that Chanticleer in all his pride,  
 His seven wivès walking by his side,  
 Cast up his eyen to the brightè sun,  
 That in the sign of Taurus had yrun  
 Twenty degrees and one, and somewhat more:  
 He knew by kind, <sup>103</sup> and by none other lore,  
 That it was prime, and crew with blissful steven, <sup>104</sup>  
 "The sun," he said, "is clomben up on heaven  
 Forty degrees and one, and more ywis. <sup>105</sup>  
 Madamè Partèlote, my worldès bliss,  
 Hearkeneth these blissful birdès how they sing,  
 And see the freshè flowers how they spring;  
 Full is mine heart of revel and soláce."

But suddenly him fell a sorrowful case;  
 For ever the latter end of joy is woe:  
 God wot that worldly joy is soon ago;  
 And if a rethor <sup>106</sup> couldè fair indite,  
 He in a chronique safely might it write,  
 As for a sovereign notability.  
 Now every wise man, let him hearken me:  
 This story is also <sup>107</sup> true, I undertake,  
 As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,  
 That women hold in full great reveréce.  
 Now will I turn again to my sentéce.

A col fox, <sup>108</sup> full of sly iniquity,  
 That in the grove had wonèd <sup>109</sup> yearès three,

<sup>102</sup> Since.

<sup>103</sup> Instinct.

<sup>104</sup> Voice.

<sup>105</sup> Certainly.

<sup>106</sup> Rhetorician.

<sup>107</sup> As.

<sup>108</sup> Black fox.

<sup>109</sup> Dwelt.

By high imaginati<sup>o</sup>n forncast,<sup>110</sup>  
 The samè night throughout the hedges brast<sup>111</sup>  
 Into the yard, there Chanticleer the fair  
 Was wont, and eke his wivès, to repair:  
 And in a bed of wortès<sup>112</sup> still he lay,  
 Till it was passèd undern<sup>113</sup> of the day,  
 Waiting his time on Chanticleer to fall:  
 As gladly do these homicidès all,  
 That in awaitè lie to murder men.  
 O falsè murderer! lurking in thy den!  
 O newè 'Scariot, newè Genelon!  
 Falsè dissimulour, O Greek Sinon,  
 That broughtest Troy all utterly to sorrow!  
 O Chanticleer! accursèd be that morrow,  
 That thou into that yard flew from the beams,  
 Thou were full well ywarnèd by thy dreams,  
 That thilkè day was perilous to thee.  
 But what that God forewot<sup>114</sup> mote needès be,  
 After the opini<sup>o</sup>n of certain clerkès.  
 Witness on him that any perfect clerk is,  
 That in school is great altercati<sup>o</sup>n  
 In this mattér, and great disputison,  
 And hath been of an hundred thousand men.  
 But I ne cannot bolt<sup>115</sup> it to the bren,<sup>116</sup>  
 As can the holy doctor Augustin,  
 Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardin,  
 Whether that Godès worthy forewiting<sup>117</sup>  
 Straineth me needly for to do a thing —  
 Needly clepe I simple necessity —  
 Or ellès if free choice be granted me  
 To do that samè thing, or do it nought,  
 Though God forewot it ere that it was wrought;  
 Or if his witing<sup>118</sup> straineth never a del,  
 But by necessity conditionèl.  
 I will not have to do of such mattèr;  
 My tale is of a cock, as ye may hear,  
 That took his counsel of his wife with sorrow  
 To walken in the yard upon that morrow  
 That he had met<sup>119</sup> the dream, that I of told.

<sup>110</sup> Predestined.<sup>115</sup> Sift.<sup>111</sup> Burst.<sup>116</sup> Bran.<sup>112</sup> Herbs.<sup>117</sup> Foreknowledge.<sup>113</sup> Midday meal-time.<sup>118</sup> Knowledge.<sup>114</sup> Foreknows.<sup>119</sup> Dreamed.

Womenès counsels be full often cold;  
 Womanès counsel brought us first to woe,  
 And made Adám from Paradise to go,  
 There as he was full merry, and well at ease.  
 But for I not,<sup>120</sup> to whom it might displease,  
 If I counsél of women wouldè blame,  
 Pass over, for I said it in my game.  
 Read authors, where they treat of such mattére,  
 And what they say of women ye may hear.  
 These be the cockès wordès, and not mine;  
 I can none harm of no woman divine.<sup>121</sup>

Fair in the sand, to bathe her merrily,  
 Lieth Partelote, and all her sisters by,  
 Again the sun; and Chanticleer so free  
 Sang merrier than the mermaid in the sea;  
 For Physiologus saith sikerly,<sup>122</sup>  
 How that they singen well and merrily.

And so befell that as he cast his eye  
 Among the wortès on a butterfly,  
 He was ware of this fox that lay full low.  
 Nothing ne list him thennè for to crow,  
 But cried anon "Cock! cock!" and up he start,<sup>123</sup>  
 As man that was affrayèd in his heart.  
 For naturally a beast desireth flee  
 From his contráry, if he may it see,  
 Though he ne'er erst<sup>124</sup> had seen it with his eye.

This Chanticleer, when he gan him espy,  
 He would have fled, but that the fox anon  
 Said, "Gentle Sir, alas! why will ye gon?  
 Be ye afraid of me that am your friend?  
 Now certes, I were worsè than a fiend,  
 If I to you would harm or villainy.  
 I am not come your counsel for to espy,  
 But truèly the cause of my comíng  
 Was only for to hearken how that ye sing:  
 For truèly ye have as merry a steven,<sup>125</sup>  
 As any angel hath that is in heaven;  
 Therewith ye have in music more feeling,  
 Than had Boece, or any that can sing.  
 My lord your father! God his soulè bless

<sup>120</sup> Know not.

<sup>121</sup> Conjecture.

<sup>122</sup> Certainly.

<sup>123</sup> Started.

<sup>124</sup> Before.

<sup>125</sup> Voice.

And eke your mother of her gentillesse,  
 Have in mine house ybeen, to my great ease:  
 And certes, sir, full fain would I you please.  
 But for men speak of singing, I will say,  
 So mote I brooken <sup>126</sup> well my eyen tway,  
 Save you, I heardè never man so sing,  
 As did your father in the morwening.  
 Certes it was of heart all that he sung.  
 And for to make his voice the morè strong,  
 He would so pain him, that with both his eyen  
 He mustè wink, so loud he wouldè crien,  
 And standen on his tiptoes therewithal,  
 And stretchen forth his neckè long and small.  
 And eke he was of such discretión,  
 That there nas no man in no regiön,  
 That him in song or wisdom mightè pass.  
 I have well read in Dan Burnel the Ass  
 Among his verse, how that there was a cock,  
 For that a priestès son gave him a knock  
 Upon his leg, while he was young and nice, <sup>127</sup>  
 He made him for to lese his benefice.  
 But certain there nis no comparisön  
 Betwix the wisdom and discretión  
 Of your fathér, and of his subtilty.  
 Now singeth, sir, for sainté Charity,  
 Let see, can ye your father counterfeit? ”

This Chanticleer his wingès gan to beat,  
 As man that could his treason not espy,  
 So was he ravished with his flattery.  
 Alas! ye lordès, many a false flatour <sup>128</sup>  
 Is in your courts, and many a losengeour, <sup>128</sup>  
 That pleasen you well morè, by my faith,  
 Than he that soothfastness <sup>129</sup> unto you saith.  
 Readeth Ecclesiast of flattery,  
 Beware, ye lordès, of hir treachery.

This Chanticleer stood high upon his toes  
 Stretching his neck, and held his eyen close,  
 And gan to crowen loudè for the nonce:  
 And Dan Russèl the fox start up at once,  
 And by the garget <sup>130</sup> hente <sup>131</sup> Chanticleer,

<sup>126</sup> Enjoy.<sup>127</sup> Foolish.<sup>128</sup> Flatterer.<sup>129</sup> Truth.<sup>130</sup> Throat.<sup>131</sup> Seized.

And on his back toward the wood him bare.  
For yet ne was there no man that him sued.<sup>132</sup>

O destiny, that mayst not be eschewed!  
Alas, that Chanticleer flew from the beams!  
Alas, his wife ne raughte<sup>133</sup> not of dreams!  
And on a Friday fell all this mischance.  
O Venus, that art goddess of pleasánce,  
Sin that thy servant was this Chanticleer,  
And in thy service did all his powér,  
More for delight, than world to multiply,  
Why wouldst thou suffer him on thy day to die?

O Gaufrid, dearè master soverèign,  
That, when thy worthy king Richárd was slain  
With shot, complainedest his death so sore,  
Why nad<sup>134</sup> I now thy sentence and thy lore,  
The Friday for to chide, as diden ye? —  
For on a Friday soothly slain was he —  
Then would I shew you how that I could plain  
For Chanticleerès dread, and for his pain.

Certes such cry, ne lamentatiòn  
Was ne'er of ladies made, when Ilión  
Was won, and Pyrrhus with his streite<sup>135</sup> swerd,  
When he had hent king Priam by the beard,  
And slain him, as saith us *Ænéidós*,  
As maden all the hennès in the close,  
When they had seen of Chanticleer the sight.  
But soverèignly Dame Partèlotè shrigh<sup>136</sup>,  
Full louder than did Hasdrubalès wife,  
When that her husband haddè lost his life,  
And that the Romans haddè burnt Cartháge.  
She was so full of torment and of rage,  
That wilfully into the fire she start,  
And brent<sup>137</sup> herselven with a steadfast heart.

O woful hennès! right so crieden ye,  
As when that Nero brente<sup>137</sup> the city  
Of Romè, crieden senatorès wives  
For that their husbands losten all hir lives;  
Withouten guilt this Nero hath hem slain.

Now will I turnè to my tale again;

<sup>132</sup> Followed.

<sup>133</sup> Cared.

<sup>134</sup> Had not.

<sup>135</sup> Drawn.

<sup>136</sup> Shrieked.

<sup>137</sup> Burnt.

This sely <sup>138</sup> widow, and eke her daughters two,  
 Hearthen these hennès cry and maken woe,  
 And out at doorès starten they anon,  
 And saw the fox toward the grovè gon,  
 And bare upon his back the cock away:  
 They crieden, "Out! harow and welawa!  
 Ha, ha! the fox!" and after him they ran,  
 And eke with stavès many another man;  
 Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot, and Garland,  
 And Malkin with a distaff in her hand;  
 Ran cow and calf, and eke the very hoggès,  
 So were they feared for barking of the doggès,  
 And shouting of the men and women eke,  
 They rannen so, hem thought hir heartè breke.<sup>139</sup>  
 They yellèden as fiendès do in hell:  
 The duckès crieden as men would hem quell:  
 The geese for fearè flewen o'er the trees,  
 Out of the hivè came the swarm of bees,  
 So hideous was the noise, a! *ben'cite!*  
 Certes he Jackè Straw, and his meynè,<sup>140</sup>  
 Ne maden never shoutès half so shrill,  
 When that they woulden any Fleming kill,  
 As thilkè day was made upon the fox.  
 Of brass they broughten beames<sup>141</sup> and of box,  
 Of horn and bone, in which they blew and poopèd,<sup>142</sup>  
 And therewithal they shriekèd and they hoopèd,<sup>143</sup>  
 It seemèd as that heaven shouldè fall.

Now, goodè men, I pray you hearkeneth all;  
 Lo, how Fortunè turneth suddenly  
 The hope and pride eke of her enemy.  
 This cock that lay upon the fox's back,  
 In all his dread, unto the fox he spake,  
 And saidè, "Sir, if that I were as ye,  
 Yet would I say, as wis<sup>144</sup> God helpè me,  
 'Turneth again, ye proudè churlès all;  
 A very pestilence upon you fall!  
 Now am I come unto the woodès side,  
 Maugre your head, the cock shall here abide:

<sup>138</sup> Simple.<sup>139</sup> Would break.<sup>140</sup> Followers.<sup>141</sup> Trumpets.<sup>142</sup> Trumpeted.<sup>143</sup> Whooped.<sup>144</sup> Surely.

I will him eat in faith, and that anon.' "

The fox answered, "In faith, it shall be done: "

And as he spake that word, all suddenly  
This cock brake from his mouth deliverly,<sup>145</sup>

And high upon a tree he flew anon.

And when the fox saw that he was ygone,

"Alas! " quoth he, "O Chanticleer, alas!

I have to you," quoth he, "ydone trespass,

Inasmuch as I makèd you afeard,

When I you hent,<sup>146</sup> and brought out of the yard;

But, sir, I did it of no wicke<sup>147</sup> intent:

Come down, and I shall tell you what I meant.

I shall say sooth to you, God help me so."

"Nay then," quoth he, "I shrew<sup>148</sup> us bothè two.

And first I shrew myself, both blood and bonès,

If thou beguile me any ofter than onès.

Thou shalt no morè through thy flattery

Do<sup>149</sup> me to sing and winken with mine eye.

For he that winketh when he shouldè see,

All wilfully, God let him never the<sup>150</sup> ! "

"Nay," quoth the fox, "but God give him mischance,

That is so indiscreet of governánce,

That jangleth<sup>151</sup> when he shouldè hold his peace."

Lo, such it is for to be reckèless

And negligent, and trust on flattery.

But ye that holden this tale a folly,

As of a fox, or of a cock and hen,

Take the morality thereof, good men.

For Saint Paul saith, That all that written is,

To our doctrine it is ywrit ywis,<sup>152</sup>

Taketh the fruit, and let the chaff be still.

Now goodè God, if that it be thy will,

As saith my lord, so make us all good men;

And bring us to his highè bliss. — *Amen.*

<sup>145</sup> Actively.

<sup>146</sup> Seized.

<sup>147</sup> Wicked.

<sup>148</sup> Curse.

<sup>149</sup> Cause.

<sup>150</sup> Thrive.

<sup>151</sup> Prateth.

<sup>152</sup> Certainly.

## TRUTH

## BALLADE OF GOOD COUNSEL

**F**LEE from the press, and dwell with soothfastness;<sup>153</sup>  
 Suffice thine owen thing, though it be small;  
 For hoard hath hate, and climbing tickleness,<sup>154</sup>  
 Press hath envy, and weal blent<sup>155</sup> overall;<sup>156</sup>  
 Savour no more than thee behovè shall;  
 Rule well thyself, that other folk canst rede;<sup>157</sup>  
 And truthè shall deliver, it is no drede.<sup>158</sup>

Temptest thee not all crooked to redress,  
 In trust of her that turneth as a ball:<sup>159</sup>  
 For great rest stands in little businèss;  
 Beware also to spurn against an awl;  
 Strive not as doth the crockè with the wall;  
 Dauntè thyself that dauntest otherès deed,  
 And truthè shall deliver, it is no drede.<sup>158</sup>

That thee is sent receive in buxomness,<sup>160</sup>  
 The wrestling for this world asketh a fall:  
 Here is none home, here nis<sup>161</sup> but wilderness:  
 Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beast, out of thy stall!  
 Know thy country, look up, thank God of all;  
 Hold the high way, and let thy ghost<sup>162</sup> thee lead,  
 And truthè shall deliver, it is no drede.<sup>158</sup>

## ENVOY

Therefore, thou Vache,<sup>163</sup> leave thine old wretchedness  
 Unto the worldè; leave now to be thrall;  
 Cry him mercy, that of his high goodnèss  
 Made thee of nought, and in especìal  
 Draw unto him, and pray in generál  
 For thee, and eke for other, heavenly meed,  
 And truthè shall deliver, it is no drede.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Truth.<sup>154</sup> Unsteadiness, instability.<sup>155</sup> Blinds.<sup>156</sup> Everywhere.<sup>157</sup> Advise.<sup>158</sup> Doubt.<sup>159</sup> *i.e.* the Goddess Fortune.<sup>160</sup> Submissiveness.<sup>161</sup> Is not.<sup>162</sup> Spirit.<sup>163</sup> Sir Philip de la Vache, a friend of Chaucer's.



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